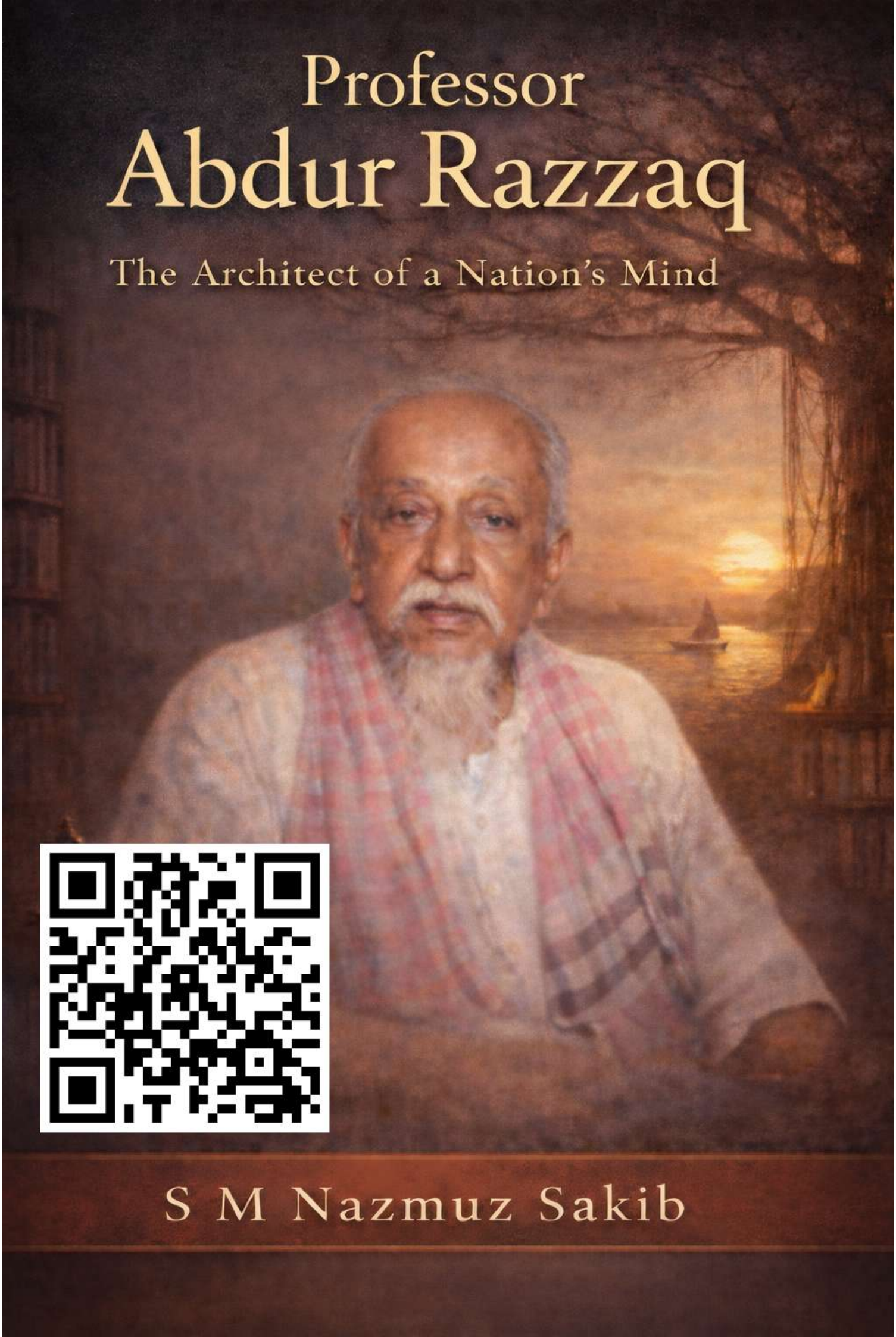
Professor Abdur Razzaq

The Architect of a Nation's Mind



S M Nazmuz Sakib

Professor Abdur Razzaq: The Architect of a Nation's Mind

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This textbook is a work of scholarly reconstruction and critical analysis. The author has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the historical, biographical and philosophical content, particularly concerning the oral tradition of Professor Abdur Razzaq's teachings. Quotations and attributions drawn from secondary sources (including Ahmed Sofa, Sardar Fazlul Karim, Rounaq Jahan and others) are cited as such.

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Dedication:
To the perpetual student and the permanent teacher, and to the living tradition of honest inquiry in Bangladesh.

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PART ONE: THE MAN, THE MIND, AND THE MAKING OF AN INTELLECTUAL LEGEND

Origins, Formation, Philosophical Frameworks, Political Thought, and the Paradox of a Thinker Who Wrote Little but Changed Everything

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Preface to Part One

This textbook is an attempt to do justice to one of the most extraordinary intellectual figures that the Bengal delta has ever produced. The challenge of writing about Professor Abdur Razzaq is, in itself, philosophically significant. Here is a man whose influence on Bangladeshi intellectual and political life was profound and pervasive, who taught generations of thinkers, politicians, economists, historians, and legal minds, who was consulted by constitutional framers and nation-builders, who was honoured with the title of National Professor and with an honorary doctorate from one of India's most prestigious universities, and yet who left behind almost no formal written record of his thought. That paradox is not merely biographical; it is the central philosophical problem of this entire study.

To write a textbook about Professor Abdur Razzaq means to reconstruct a mind from its effects. It means to trace the outlines of a philosophy through the works it inspired in others, to read his ideas in the texts of his students, to hear his arguments in the debates his teachings provoked, and to understand his vision of Bengal, of South Asia, of politics and history, through the oral tradition he consciously cultivated. In this sense, the challenge of studying Razzaq mirrors some of the oldest challenges in the history of philosophy itself. Socrates wrote nothing. Confucius wrote almost nothing. Jesus of Nazareth wrote nothing. The greatest teachers in human history have often been figures whose power resided not in the written word but in the living relationship between a mind fully alive to its knowledge and students whose minds were still in formation. Razzaq belongs to that tradition, and to understand him we must understand what that tradition means.

This first part of the textbook covers the broad sweep of Razzaq's life, his early formation, his intellectual environment, the philosophical and political framework within which he operated, and the deeper currents of thought that shaped him. It situates him within the intellectual history of Bengal and South Asia, examines the influence of his great teacher Harold Laski at the London School of Economics, analyses the socio-political context of colonial Bengal that gave his thinking its distinctive urgency, and begins the systematic investigation of his philosophical positions on politics, history, economics, jurisprudence, and culture. Subsequent parts will take up his specific works and texts, his role in the Bangladesh independence movement, his legacy in contemporary Bangladeshi thought, and the controversies that surrounded both his ideas and the interpretations placed on them after his death.

A note on method: this textbook draws on the documented oral tradition, on the memoirs of his students, on the two major book-length accounts of his thought by Ahmed Sofa and Sardar Fazlul Karim, on his lecture "Bangladesh: State of the Nation," on the posthumously published

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thesis "Political Parties in India," and on recent scholarly commentaries from 2022 through 2025. It also places his thought in dialogue with contemporary developments in political philosophy, postcolonial theory, constitutional jurisprudence, and the history of ideas in order to demonstrate not just the historical importance of his work but its continuing relevance.

Chapter One: The Bengal That Made Him - Historical and Cultural Context

To understand Professor Abdur Razzaq, one must first understand Bengal. Not just Bengal as a geographical and administrative unit of the British Empire, but Bengal as a civilizational concept, as a space where multiple traditions of thought, faith, language, commerce, and political organisation had been interacting and competing for centuries before a young man from Nawabganj sat down in a lecture hall at the University of Dhaka in 1931. The Bengal into which Abdur Razzaq was born in 1914 was simultaneously one of the oldest and most continuously inhabited regions of human civilisation and one of the sites where the most violent disruptions of modernity were being played out. It was a land of extraordinary intellectual ferment and extraordinary poverty, of ancient traditions and new ideas arriving with relentless speed from Europe, a land where questions of identity, religion, language, economic justice, and political sovereignty were all live issues being contested in every drawing room, every mosque courtyard, every college common room, and every village gathering.

The Long History of Bengal's Commercial and Cultural Achievement

One of the ideas that Razzaq returned to throughout his life, and which appears prominently in the accounts of his conversations preserved by his students, was the centrality of trade and commerce to Bengal's historical achievement. This was not a conventional view. The standard colonial narrative and even some nationalist counter-narratives tended to portray Bengal primarily as an agricultural society, a land of rice paddies and river deltas, defined above all by its relationship to the land. Razzaq challenged this fundamentally. He insisted, as we know from the memoir of former finance minister Md. Syeduzzaman, that the prosperity of Bengal was never dependent on its agriculture but on its trade and commerce and the products of its handicrafts and small-scale enterprises.

This insight was grounded in a serious reading of economic history. Bengal before the arrival of the British had been one of the great centres of textile manufacturing in the world. Dacca muslin, the famous woven fabric so fine that contemporaries compared it to woven air, was not merely a local product but an export commodity that reached markets from Persia to Rome to the courts of the Mughal emperors. The weaving traditions of Bengal were not cottage industries in any contemptuous sense; they were sophisticated systems of production, quality control, and commercial exchange that involved thousands of artisans, merchants, financiers, and trading houses. When Razzaq asked rhetorically, as Syeduzzaman reports, why traders from the Middle East came to Bangladesh, he was pointing to this historical reality: Bengal had things that the world wanted, and the world came to Bengal to get them.

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Understanding this commercial and manufacturing heritage was, for Razzaq, essential to understanding both the nature of British colonialism and the task of post-colonial nation-building. The destruction of Bengal's textile industry by British mercantilist policies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not merely an economic event; it was a civilisational catastrophe that fundamentally altered the social structure of Bengal, impoverished millions of skilled workers, disrupted the commercial networks that had sustained urban culture, and created the conditions of agricultural dependency and rural poverty that later colonial and nationalist writers would mistake for a permanent feature of Bengali life. Razzaq's historical consciousness allowed him to see what many of his contemporaries could not: that the Bengal of British colonial times was not the true Bengal, not the natural or inevitable Bengal, but a Bengal that had been systematically impoverished and distorted by imperial economic policy.

This historical analysis had profound implications for Razzaq's political thought. If Bengal's poverty was historically produced rather than naturally given, then it could be historically overcome. If the destruction of Bengal's commercial and manufacturing base was the result of specific policy choices made by the British Raj, then the restoration of economic vitality required specific, historically-informed policy choices by an independent government. This is why Razzaq's engagement with economic questions was never purely abstract or theoretical; it was always grounded in the concrete history of how actual human communities had organized their economic lives and what forces had disrupted those organisations.

The Partition of Bengal and the Crisis of Identity

The Bengal into which Razzaq was born had already experienced one of the most traumatic political events in its modern history: the Partition of Bengal in 1905 by Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India under the British Crown. The decision to divide Bengal along religious lines, creating a Muslim-majority East Bengal and Assam and a Hindu-majority West Bengal and Bihar, was officially justified on administrative grounds. The official argument was that Bengal, with its enormous population, was simply too large to be governed as a single unit. But the political subtext was immediately apparent to contemporaries: the partition was designed to weaken the Bengal Congress movement, which had become the most organised and vocal nationalist force in India, by dividing its Hindu and Muslim constituents and appealing to Muslim interests in the new eastern province.

The partition produced an immediate and intense reaction. The Swadeshi movement, the boycott of British goods, the promotion of Indian manufactures, the assertion of Bengali cultural unity across religious lines: all of these were responses to the partition, and all of them engaged the question of what Bengal was, what Bengali identity meant, and how religion, language, and political interest were to be related in the construction of a Bengal political community. The partition was reversed in 1911, but the political and psychological damage it had done to Hindu-Muslim relations in Bengal proved impossible to repair completely. The idea that the two religious communities had fundamentally different interests, and that their interests could be articulated and advanced by separate political organisations operating under different flags, had been planted in Bengali political consciousness and would grow to produce the catastrophe of 1947.

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Razzaq came of age in the wake of these events. He was seven years old when the partition was reversed. He was a teenager during the period of the Khilafat movement and Gandhi's non-cooperation campaign, events that briefly produced a spectacular but ultimately fragile alliance between the Congress and Muslim League. He was entering the University of Dhaka in 1931, during the period when the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League were beginning their final, fatal divergence, when Muhammad Ali Jinnah was consolidating his vision of Muslim political separatism, and when the intellectual project of defining what Indian politics meant in terms of its religious communities was producing a body of thought that would eventually result in the two-nation theory and the Partition of 1947.

The University of Dhaka itself, founded in 1921, was a product of the post-partition political dispensation. Established partly as compensation for the reversal of the 1905 partition and partly as a response to the demands of the Muslim educated class for higher educational institutions in the eastern part of the province, the university was from its founding a site where questions of Muslim identity, Bengali identity, colonial modernity, and political aspiration were continuously negotiated. The faculty included both British professors and Indian academics, the student body was mixed but with a strong Muslim Bengali majority, and the intellectual atmosphere was charged with the urgency of a community trying to define itself in rapidly changing political circumstances.

The Muslim Bengali Intellectual Dilemma

One of the most important contexts for understanding Razzaq is the specific dilemma of the Muslim Bengali intellectual class in the first half of the twentieth century. This class faced a set of overlapping and sometimes contradictory demands and loyalties that made the project of intellectual self-definition unusually complex and painful.

On one hand, there was the demand of Islamic identity. The ulama and the broader current of Islamic revivalism in South Asia, represented by movements from the Deobandi school to the Ahl-i-Hadith, insisted that Muslim identity required the subordination of ethnic and linguistic particularisms to the universal bonds of the Islamic umma. A Bengali Muslim was, in this framework, primarily a Muslim, and his or her cultural allegiances, political loyalties, and intellectual orientations ought to flow from that primary identification. The increasing organisation of Muslim political life around the Muslim League and the articulation of the two-nation theory gave this religious definition of identity a powerful political expression.

On the other hand, there was the demand of Bengali cultural identity. The Bengali language and its rich literary tradition, the specific landscape and ecological character of the delta, the folk traditions and aesthetic sensibilities of the Bengali people: all of these constituted an equally powerful source of identity that cut across religious lines. A Muslim who read Rabindranath Tagore, who listened to Baul music, who celebrated the harvest in traditional ways, who used the Bengali language as the primary vehicle of thought and feeling, was drawing on resources of identity that were not specifically Islamic and that connected him or her to the Hindu Bengali tradition in ways that purely religious politics found uncomfortable.

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Razzaq navigated this dilemma with extraordinary intellectual honesty and sophistication. He was not, in any simple sense, either a religious identitarian or a secular nationalist. He was a man who took the full complexity of Bengal's historical experience seriously, who refused to reduce that complexity to any single ideological formula, and who was consequently found inconvenient and dangerous by political movements that required simple, mobilising identifications. His famous essay on Bengali Muslims, which we will examine in detail in Part Three, represents his most sustained engagement with this dilemma, and it is a piece of writing that remains charged with contemporary relevance precisely because the dilemma it addresses has not been resolved.

It is important to note here what the Department of Political Science at the University of Dhaka has documented: that in the early period of his career, like many Muslim intellectuals of the time, Razzaq was a supporter of the Pakistan Movement. This is not something that later admirers have always been comfortable acknowledging, but it is historically important and philosophically significant. Razzaq's eventual disillusionment with the direction that Pakistan took, his growing recognition that the two-nation theory had been a fundamental political and historical error, and his eventual commitment to Bengali cultural and political autonomy were not positions he held from the beginning. They were conclusions reached through a process of painful experience and rigorous analysis, and that process is itself one of the most instructive aspects of his intellectual biography.

Chapter Two: Early Life - The Formation of a Mind

Birth and Background

Abdur Razzaq was born in approximately 1914, in the village of Paragram in the Nawabganj area of what was then Dacca district in Bengal Presidency. The uncertainty about the exact year of his birth is itself a small but telling detail: the meticulous bureaucratic recording of dates that colonial administration imposed on urban and upper-class life had not fully penetrated the rural world of a modest Muslim family in early twentieth-century Bengal, and the conventions of a more oral and communal world, where a person's identity was defined by relationships and roles rather than by documents and statistics, still operated in the villages.

His father, Abdul Ali, was a police officer from Alinagar in Keraniganj, a fact that is worth dwelling on for a moment. The Bengal police in the late colonial period was a complex institution. On one hand, it was an arm of the colonial state, responsible for enforcing a system of laws and maintaining a social order that was fundamentally designed to serve imperial interests. On the other hand, the lower and middle ranks of the police were populated by Bengali Muslims who were trying to secure economic stability and a degree of social respectability for their families in a world that offered limited options to members of a community that had been, in the colonial period, significantly marginalised from the commercial and professional opportunities available to educated Hindus with longer-established relationships to the colonial economy.

Abdul Ali's occupation tells us that Razzaq grew up in a family that valued stability, discipline, institutional affiliation, and the possibilities that colonial modernity offered for social

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advancement. It was not a wealthy family, and the world of grand landowners, established professional men, and urban intellectuals was not his by birth. But it was a family with enough security and enough ambition to send a gifted child to the best schools available and to support his education to the highest levels.

The fact that Razzaq was born in his maternal home, in Paragram rather than in his father's native Alinagar, places him in that specifically Bengali world of the extended family, the bari system, where children maintained close relationships with both paternal and maternal lineages and where the village remained a point of reference and return throughout adult life. This connection to the village, to the specific ecology of the Bengal delta, to the rhythms of agricultural and river life, would remain important to Razzaq's thinking throughout his career, even as his intellectual formation became increasingly cosmopolitan.

Schooling and Early Academic Achievement

Razzaq attended the Government Muslim High School in Dhaka, where he passed his matriculation examination in first division, earning a merit scholarship. He then studied at Dhaka College, where he passed the intermediate examination at the top of the merit list, earning another scholarship. These achievements were not merely indicators of academic talent; they were evidence of an exceptional capacity for systematic study and analytical thinking, demonstrated in competitive examinations that required not just memorisation but the ability to organise knowledge and present it coherently.

The Government Muslim High School was an institution specifically designed to provide quality secondary education to Muslim Bengali boys, and its establishment reflected the colonial government's recognition that the Muslim community of Bengal was significantly underrepresented in higher education and the professions. The school offered a curriculum that combined Islamic education with the secular sciences, English literature and language with Bengali, mathematics and natural sciences with history and geography. This combination was formative for Razzaq: it gave him access to two intellectual worlds that were often presented as mutually exclusive, the world of Islamic learning and the world of European modernity, and it began the process of thinking through their relationship that would occupy him for the rest of his life.

Dhaka College, where he completed his intermediate studies, was one of the oldest and most prestigious educational institutions in Bengal, with a tradition of producing outstanding graduates who went on to distinguished careers in academic, professional, and public life. The college's atmosphere in the early 1930s was intellectually charged: students and faculty were engaged with questions of nationalism, social reform, economic development, and political organisation that the colonial situation made urgent. The college was a place where a young man could encounter the great traditions of both Indian and European intellectual life, could read Mill and Tagore, could argue about Gandhi and Jinnah, could begin to form the questions that would define his intellectual career.

Entering the University of Dhaka

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In 1931, Razzaq was admitted to the Department of Political Economy at the University of Dhaka. The University of Dhaka had been founded only ten years earlier, in 1921, and it was still in the process of establishing its identity and building its intellectual culture. But it already had a faculty of considerable distinction, and it was rapidly becoming the centre of intellectual life for the Bengali Muslim community.

The choice of political economy as a field of study is significant. Political economy in the tradition of the time was not merely the study of economic mechanisms in the narrow sense; it was the study of the relationship between economic organisation and political power, between the distribution of wealth and the distribution of authority, between the way a society produced its goods and the way it organised its governance. This was a tradition that ran from Adam Smith and David Ricardo through John Stuart Mill to Marx and beyond, and it was one that had everything to say about the specific situation of Bengal under colonial rule.

By choosing political economy, Razzaq positioned himself at the intersection of two of the most urgent questions facing his society: how is Bengal's economy to be understood, and how is Bengal's political future to be organised? These were not merely academic questions; they were questions that his community was living through, and the quality of the answers that the educated class could develop would, in large measure, determine the quality of the political choices they would make. The fact that he earned his master's degree in first class in 1936, receiving both a political science and an economics qualification when the department was later divided, confirms that he had mastered both dimensions of this double question at the highest academic level.

The Early Teaching Years

Upon completing his master's degree in 1936, Razzaq was appointed as a lecturer in the Department of Political Economy at the University of Dhaka. He was twenty-two years old. The appointment of a fresh graduate directly to a lectureship is itself an indication of the exceptional quality of his academic performance; these positions were competitive and were awarded to candidates who had demonstrated not merely competence but outstanding intellectual promise.

He taught in this position for nearly a decade before going to London. These early teaching years are not well-documented, but they were clearly years of intense intellectual formation. The young lecturer was teaching political economy and political theory to students who were themselves deeply engaged with the political crisis of South Asia, and the act of teaching required him to think through, systematise, and articulate his understanding of politics, economics, and history with a rigor and clarity that purely private study does not demand. Teaching is, in a profound sense, the best way to learn, because the necessity of explaining to others forces the teacher to identify exactly where his or her own understanding is clear and where it remains murky, exactly where the arguments are solid and where they are merely plausible.

The period from 1936 to 1945 was, moreover, one of extraordinary historical intensity. The Second World War, which began in 1939, transformed the political landscape of India and the world. The Congress and the Muslim League took different positions on Indian participation in the war effort, producing a crisis in the independence movement and accelerating the political

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separation of the two organisations. The Bengal famine of 1943, in which millions of people died of starvation in circumstances that implicated both British war policy and the failures of local administration, was a catastrophic event that brought into sharp relief all the questions about economic governance, political accountability, and the relationship between colonial power and human welfare that Razzaq had been teaching about in abstract terms.

The famine was, for Razzaq's generation of Bengali intellectuals, a defining moment. It was impossible, after the Bengal famine, to speak abstractly about economic policy without feeling the weight of the specific human consequences of specific economic decisions. The economists who had allowed grain to be exported from Bengal while millions starved, the government officials who had delayed and minimised the crisis while people died, the political system that had denied Bengal's people the power to protect themselves through their own democratic institutions: all of these were indictments not just of particular individuals but of the system as a whole, and they gave Razzaq's economic and political thinking a moral urgency that purely academic study cannot produce.

Chapter Three: London and Laski - The European Education and Its Limits

Going to London

After a decade of teaching, Razzaq was given the opportunity to pursue advanced study at the London School of Economics. He arrived in London in 1945, just as the Second World War was drawing to its close, and he would remain there until sometime after 1950, a period of six years during which he was immersed in one of the world's great centres of academic political thought while simultaneously watching, from the distance of London, the most dramatic political transformation in the history of South Asia: the independence of India and Pakistan in August 1947.

The London School of Economics in 1945 was at the height of its intellectual prestige and political influence. Founded in 1895 by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Graham Wallas, and George Bernard Shaw as a specifically socialist institution dedicated to studying and improving the economic and political conditions of British society, the LSE had by the mid-twentieth century become one of the world's leading centres for social science research and teaching. Its faculty included some of the most distinguished economists, political theorists, sociologists, and lawyers in the world, and its student body was genuinely international, including future leaders, intellectuals, and public servants from across the British Empire and beyond.

Harold Laski, under whose supervision Razzaq worked, was at this point the LSE's most famous and controversial faculty member. Laski had been teaching at the LSE since 1920 and had been Professor of Political Science since 1926. He was a member of the Fabian Society, a prominent figure in the Labour Party, and a political theorist of wide influence whose books had shaped political thinking in Britain, India, and many other parts of the world. He was also, according to contemporary accounts, one of the most brilliant and stimulating teachers of his generation, a

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man whose lectures were famous for their dazzling range, their intellectual energy, and their capacity to connect abstract theoretical questions to the urgent practical problems of the day.

Laski's influence on Asian and African students at the LSE was particularly strong. Future leaders and intellectuals from India, Pakistan, the Caribbean, Africa, and many other parts of the colonial world passed through his seminars and were marked by his teaching. Jawaharlal Nehru was one of his most famous students, and the influence of Laski's democratic socialism on Indian Congress politics was widely acknowledged. The LSE under Laski was, for many colonial intellectuals, a place where they could encounter the most sophisticated available account of the relationship between capitalism, democracy, and social justice, and where they could develop frameworks for thinking about the specific problems of post-colonial nation-building.

What Laski Taught

To understand Laski's influence on Razzaq, it is necessary to understand what Laski's political theory actually contained. Laski was not a simple or doctrinaire thinker. His intellectual journey took him from a youthful pluralism, in which he challenged the absolute sovereignty of the state and argued for the legitimacy of multiple, overlapping centres of social authority, through a deeper engagement with Marxism and historical materialism in the 1930s, to a mature position that combined elements of liberal democracy with socialist economics and a strong critique of capitalism's tendency to undermine political freedom.

The early Laski had argued, drawing on the tradition of English political pluralism associated with figures like John Neville Figgis and F. W. Maitland, that the state was not the supreme and all-encompassing authority that the Hegelian and Austinian traditions had made it. Society consisted of multiple associations, guilds, churches, trade unions, families, professional organisations, each of which had its own legitimacy and its own sphere of authority. The state was one association among others, with special responsibilities for coordination and public welfare but without the absolute and unlimited sovereignty that legal positivists attributed to it. This pluralist argument had obvious implications for colonial politics: if sovereignty could be distributed among multiple social entities, then the claim of the British imperial state to absolute and unlimited authority over its colonial territories was philosophically unjustifiable.

The later Laski became increasingly concerned with the relationship between economic power and political freedom. In books like "The State in Theory and Practice" (1935) and "Parliamentary Government in England" (1938), he argued that capitalist economic organisation was fundamentally incompatible with genuine political democracy because it concentrated economic power in the hands of a small class of property owners who used that power to subordinate political institutions to their interests. Real democracy, in this analysis, required not just formal political equality but substantial economic equality, and that required some form of socialist reorganisation of the economy.

This analysis was enormously relevant to the situation of colonial Bengal. The concentration of economic power in the hands of British capital and its Indian collaborators, the exclusion of the Muslim Bengali peasantry and working class from economic opportunity, the manipulation of political institutions to serve the interests of property over the interests of the majority: all of

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these were features of colonial Bengal that Laski's analysis could illuminate. Razzaq absorbed this critique and made it his own, but he did not absorb it uncritically. He brought to it the specific historical knowledge of Bengal and South Asia that Laski lacked, and he used it to ask questions that Laski's more Eurocentric framework did not naturally generate.

The Thesis on Political Parties in India

The most tangible product of Razzaq's time at the LSE was his research thesis on political parties in India, submitted in 1950. The thesis remained unpublished for over seven decades, circulating in a kind of legendary obscurity among those who knew of its existence, until it was finally published in 2022 by the University Press Limited of Bangladesh. The publication, seventy-two years after the thesis was written, was itself a significant event in Bangladeshi intellectual life, celebrated by a public launch attended by prominent academics, journalists, and public figures who spoke of the thesis as a key to unlocking the mysteries of Razzaq's thought.

The thesis is a work of historical and political analysis focused on the origins and development of political parties in the Indian subcontinent. It draws on a wide range of primary and secondary sources, engages with the existing scholarly literature, and advances a number of arguments that were, in 1950, genuinely original and that remain, in many respects, relevant and penetrating today.

One of the central arguments of the thesis concerns the relationship between religious nationalism and political party formation in India. Razzaq argues that religious nationalism in India, meaning the tendency to organize political action around religious community identities rather than around class interests, economic programmes, or ideological visions, was not simply a consequence of British divide-and-rule politics, though that certainly played a role. Religious nationalism had deeper roots in the Hindu and Muslim religious reform movements of the nineteenth century, which developed separately from each other without significant overlap and which produced different, and ultimately incompatible, visions of political modernity.

This argument is important because it challenges one of the most convenient explanations for the Partition of 1947, namely the British perfidy argument, which locates responsibility for Hindu-Muslim conflict entirely in the manipulations of colonial policy. Razzaq does not deny that British policy exacerbated communal tensions, but he insists that the communalism of Indian politics had autonomous roots in the internal development of the Hindu and Muslim communities themselves, and that understanding those roots requires a serious engagement with religious and intellectual history rather than a simple story of imperial manipulation. This is a more uncomfortable analysis than the British perfidy argument, because it places some responsibility for the catastrophe of Partition on the Indian communities themselves, but it is also a more honest and ultimately more useful analysis.

A second major argument in the thesis concerns the character of Indian political parties. Razzaq argues, as Professor Rounaq Jahan of the Centre for Policy Dialogue summarised at the 2022 launch, that there was no truly democratic political party in India in any meaningful sense. Political parties in India, both the Congress and the Muslim League, were organised around personal leadership, religious identity, and access to patronage rather than around coherent

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political and economic programmes. They created spaces for competitive power-seeking but not spaces for genuine political deliberation, peaceful dialogue, or the articulation of alternative economic visions. They served the interests of their leading factions at the expense of the broader membership and the public they claimed to represent.

This critique was directed at the political parties of pre-independence India, but its implications for post-independence political development were obvious, and Razzaq was clearly aware of them. Human rights activist Hameeda Hossain, speaking at the 2022 book launch, noted that Razzaq was critical of the role of the military and the identity politics pursued by political parties. And former finance minister Syeduzzaman observed that the thoughts of Razzaq were still relevant as political parties had made power a life-and-death matter, a problem that was as acute in Bangladesh in 2022 as it had been in India in 1950.

Why Razzaq Returned Without a Degree

One of the most discussed aspects of Razzaq's career is the fact that he returned from London without completing his doctorate. Harold Laski, his supervisor, died on 24 March 1950, before Razzaq had submitted his thesis, and this death disrupted the completion of the formal degree. But there are reasons to think that the failure to complete the doctorate was not merely a matter of circumstance and that it reflected something significant about Razzaq's intellectual character and priorities.

The Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation, which preserves his legacy, notes that Razzaq was always more studious and ruminative than expressive, that he was remorselessly reticent in writing, and that pensive reflection when alone was his normal demeanour. These characteristics are not well-suited to the requirements of formal academic degree completion, which demands the transformation of private intellectual work into a public, examinable document. Razzaq's intellectual style was essentially conversational and dialectical rather than expository; he thought through problems in dialogue with interlocutors, revised his positions in response to challenge, and valued the living process of inquiry over the finished product of the published argument.

There is also the matter of what he returned to. The late 1940s and early 1950s in East Bengal, which had just become East Pakistan, were years of extraordinary political urgency. The new state of Pakistan was attempting to define itself, to frame its constitution, to organise its institutions, and to determine the place of its Bengali-speaking majority within a state whose dominant culture was Urdu-speaking and whose power centre was located in West Pakistan, a thousand miles away. These were not abstract political questions; they were questions about the future of Razzaq's community, about whether the promise of Muslim political unity that had justified the two-nation theory would be honoured or betrayed, about what kind of political and economic arrangements would emerge from the wreckage of colonialism.

A man with Razzaq's knowledge, analytical capacity, and networks of connection was, in this situation, far more urgently needed as a teacher, adviser, and intellectual resource than as a completed PhD candidate writing up a dissertation for a London degree. He returned to Dhaka and to the department of political science, where he taught until 1975, and he became in the process one of the most important intellectual figures of his generation, not despite his

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unfinished doctorate but in many ways because of the choice it represented: the choice to be present, engaged, and useful to his community rather than to secure a formal credential in a foreign institution.

Ahmed Sofa's memory of asking Razzaq about this is particularly illuminating. Sofa told his mentor that he wanted to do research on the middle class of Bengal in the nineteenth century and asked for recommendations on where to begin. Razzaq laughed and replied that when he had asked the same question of Laski, Laski had shown him the library and said, "My boy, go and soak." And Razzaq, Sofa records, followed this advice for the rest of his life: he soaked himself in knowledge, immersed himself in libraries and books and conversations, and encouraged his students to do the same rather than to rush toward conclusions. This is not the approach of someone who is primarily interested in credentialing; it is the approach of someone for whom knowledge is a way of being in the world rather than a means to an end.

Chapter Four: The Philosophy of the Gyantapas - Razzaq as Intellectual Archetype

The Title "Gyantapas" and Its Meaning

The title by which Razzaq is most commonly known in Bengali intellectual culture is Gyantapas, a Sanskrit-Bengali compound word that can be translated approximately as "one who practices the asceticism of knowledge" or "knowledge ascetic." The word tapa, from the Sanskrit tapas, refers to the practice of austerity or self-discipline for a spiritual or intellectual purpose, the kind of concentrated, self-denying effort that produces transformation not just of understanding but of character. The word gyan, from the Sanskrit jnana, means knowledge, but in the philosophical traditions of the subcontinent it means more than the simple accumulation of information; it means the kind of deep, transformative understanding that changes the knower along with the known.

To call someone a Gyantapas is to say something very specific about the quality of their intellectual commitment. It is not to say that they know a lot, though that is certainly implied. It is to say that their relationship to knowledge is one of extraordinary discipline and devotion, that they approach the pursuit of understanding with the same total commitment that a religious ascetic brings to the pursuit of spiritual realisation, and that this commitment shapes their entire way of being in the world. The Gyantapas does not pursue knowledge for practical advantage, for social prestige, or for the production of publishable works; he or she pursues it for its own sake, with a discipline that requires the sacrifice of many ordinary satisfactions, including, in Razzaq's case, the satisfactions of publication, reputation, and formal academic success.

This concept has deep roots in the philosophical traditions of the Indian subcontinent. In the Hindu philosophical tradition, jnana yoga, the path of knowledge, is one of the three classical paths to liberation described in the Bhagavad Gita, alongside karma yoga (the path of action) and bhakti yoga (the path of devotion). The jnana yogi seeks liberation through the direct comprehension of reality, through the effort to distinguish appearance from truth, contingent from necessary, particular from universal. This requires not just intellectual exercise but a

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specific kind of ethical and existential commitment: the willingness to sacrifice the comfort of conventional beliefs for the discomfort of honest inquiry, the willingness to follow an argument wherever it leads regardless of the consequences for one's social position or emotional security.

Whether Razzaq would have described himself in these Hindu philosophical terms is uncertain, given his Muslim background and his characteristic reticence about his own intellectual self-description. But the concept of Gyantapas, which was applied to him by his students and admirers, captures something real and important about his intellectual character: an extraordinary discipline of attention, a refusal to accept easy answers, a commitment to pursuing questions to their deepest roots, and a willingness to sacrifice the ordinary satisfactions of professional academic life for the more austere satisfactions of genuine understanding.

The Socratic Analogy

Badruddin Umar, one of Razzaq's most distinguished students, reportedly once proposed that Razzaq be called Bengal's Socrates. When asked to explain this comparison, Umar replied that Socrates, like Razzaq, did not write, and that like Socrates, Razzaq spread knowledge by encouraging others to learn and think. His teaching method, Umar observed, was essentially verbal, like Socrates'.

The Socratic analogy is illuminating and worth taking seriously as a philosophical comparison rather than merely as a rhetorical compliment. Socrates (469-399 BCE) was one of the most influential philosophers in the Western tradition, and his influence was exercised entirely through personal conversation, without the mediation of any written text. What we know of Socrates we know through the dialogues of Plato, the memoirs of Xenophon, and the comedies of Aristophanes, sources that each present a different and sometimes contradictory image of the man. But through all these different images, a consistent intellectual personality emerges: a man who was possessed by an irresistible compulsion to examine beliefs and arguments, who refused to allow received opinions to pass without interrogation, who used question and counter-question to reveal the hidden assumptions and internal contradictions of the positions he examined, and who understood the examined life as the only life worth living.

The Socratic method, or elenchus, worked by identifying the interlocutor's confident claim to knowledge and then subjecting that claim to systematic questioning until its limitations, contradictions, or inadequate foundations were revealed. The goal was not to humiliate the interlocutor but to bring him or her to a state of genuine aporia, of productive uncertainty, from which genuine inquiry could begin. Socrates' most important philosophical insight, captured in the famous dictum that he knew only that he knew nothing, was that the first step toward genuine knowledge is the recognition of the depth of one's own ignorance, and that this recognition can only come through honest self-examination.

Razzaq's teaching style, as reconstructed from the accounts of his students, shows clear Socratic elements. He did not lecture in the conventional sense, delivering pre-packaged conclusions for students to absorb and reproduce. He questioned, challenged, provoked, and redirected. He asked why one thought what one thought, what assumptions underlay one's analysis, what historical or comparative evidence one had for one's conclusions, what alternative explanations one had

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considered and why one had rejected them. He encouraged students to read widely, to think independently, and to resist the temptation to substitute the authority of established names for the labour of personal understanding.

But there are also important differences between Razzaq and Socrates that the analogy should not obscure. Socrates was committed to a rigorous method of formal argumentation, to the logical examination of definitions and concepts, to a kind of philosophical analysis that was relatively indifferent to historical and empirical content. Razzaq, by contrast, was deeply immersed in history, in the specific facts and patterns of South Asian historical experience, and in the empirical analysis of economic and political institutions. His was not a philosophy of pure conceptual analysis but a philosophy deeply embedded in historical understanding, a philosophy that took seriously the specificity of times and places and peoples rather than seeking to transcend them.

The Bibliophile and the Architecture of Knowledge

One of the most distinctive aspects of Razzaq's intellectual character was his relationship to books. The Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation's account of his personal library describes it in terms that suggest something close to a passion:

Razzaq was a bibliophile in the fullest sense: a person for whom books were not merely instruments of information retrieval but objects of devotion, companions in thought, windows onto the full range of human intellectual achievement. His library reflected, the Foundation notes, the imagination and inquisitiveness of a rich and restless mind with eclectic curiosities, aesthetic inclinations, cosmopolitan sensibilities, and the intellectual orientations provoked and sustained by the European Enlightenment project. His acquisition style was neither systematic nor agenda-driven; he collected books across subjects and traditions, following his intellectual curiosity wherever it led, building a personal library that was a repository of knowledge of exceptional quality and diversity covering a wide range of subjects in the social sciences, arts, and the humanities.

This approach to book collection was itself a philosophical statement. In a world where academic specialisation was becoming increasingly narrow, where the pressure to produce within a particular disciplinary framework was reducing intellectual horizons, Razzaq insisted on the full breadth of the humanistic tradition. He read economics but also literature; political theory but also history; philosophy but also natural science; European thinkers but also the rich traditions of Islamic scholarship and South Asian intellectual life. His library was a refusal of the intellectual compartmentalization that modern academic organization encourages, a demonstration that genuine understanding of the human condition requires engagement with the full range of human intellectual achievement across disciplines, cultures, and periods.

The act of collecting books during his time in London, where he sought and received a Diploma in Librarianship and pursued his cherished dream of building a personal library, tells us something about how Razzaq understood the relationship between individual intellectual work and the accumulated wisdom of the tradition. Books are not the only containers of knowledge; they can be surpassed and contradicted by experience, by conversation, by observation. But they

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are indispensable: they preserve the thinking of minds no longer living, they make available the insights of cultures and periods otherwise inaccessible, they create the possibility of intellectual conversation across time that is one of the great privileges of literate culture. A man who builds a great personal library is making a statement about the seriousness of his intellectual commitment and about his understanding of the relationship between individual effort and collective achievement.

The fate of Razzaq's library after his death is itself a significant story. His nephew, Abul Khair Litu, received the books as a gift and took it upon himself to preserve the collection and make it gradually available to scholars and researchers. From this commitment emerged the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation (ARF), established in institutional form in 2002, which has worked to preserve and extend Razzaq's intellectual legacy. The Foundation's existence is testimony to the continuing power of the values Razzaq embodied: the primacy of knowledge, the duty to share it, and the responsibility of each generation to preserve and transmit the intellectual heritage of the past.

Chapter Five: Political Thought - Between Laski's Socialism and Bengali Realism

The Framework of Democratic Socialism

Razzaq's political thought emerged from the encounter between the democratic socialist tradition he encountered at the LSE under Laski's influence and the specific historical realities of Bengal and South Asia. This encounter produced a political philosophy that cannot simply be labelled as socialist or liberal or nationalist because it drew critically on all of these traditions while reducing itself to none of them.

The democratic socialist tradition, as Laski articulated it, begins with the recognition that political democracy and economic capitalism are in fundamental tension. Formal political equality, the equal right to vote and participate in political processes, is undermined in practice by economic inequality, by the fact that those who control economic resources also control the conditions under which political competition occurs: the media, the educational system, the terms of economic dependence that constrain the political choices of working people. Real democracy, in this framework, requires not just political reform but economic transformation, the redistribution of economic power in ways that give all citizens genuine capacity for political participation rather than merely formal rights.

Razzaq absorbed this critique and found it confirmed by the specific history of Bengal. The manipulation of peasant political consciousness by landlords and moneylenders, the use of economic dependence to constrain voting behaviour, the concentration of press ownership and educational privilege in the hands of economically powerful minorities, the systematic exclusion of the Bengali Muslim peasantry from the economic opportunities that colonial modernity created for others: all of these were instances of the general principle that Laski had articulated in abstract terms. The analysis had teeth when applied to Bengal in a way that it might not have had if Razzaq had stayed in London and applied it to Britain.

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But Razzaq was not simply an applier of Laski's framework to Bengali conditions. He brought to that framework a historical knowledge and a regional specificity that Laski's more Eurocentric analysis lacked. He was aware, for example, that the categories of class analysis derived from European capitalism did not map straightforwardly onto the structures of colonial Bengali society, where economic power was mediated not just by ownership of means of production but by caste, religion, ethnicity, colonial status, and the specific forms of agrarian organisation that had developed in the delta. He was aware that the Bengali Muslim peasantry occupied a position that was not reducible to the European proletariat, and that developing a political movement capable of addressing their interests required categories of analysis that went beyond the standard vocabulary of European socialism.

He was also aware, with increasing urgency as the political crisis of the 1940s and 1950s developed, that the dominant political organisations in South Asia, both the Congress and the Muslim League, were not in practice instruments of popular democratic will but organisations controlled by elite factions whose interests diverged sharply from those of the peasants and workers in whose name they claimed to speak. This awareness is central to his thesis on political parties in India, and it is one of the ways in which his analysis surpasses the more sympathetic accounts of Congress and League politics that were common among intellectuals of his generation.

On Sovereignty and the State

Razzaq's engagement with Laski's pluralism, his early argument that sovereignty should not be conceived as absolute and indivisible but should be distributed among multiple social institutions, appears to have left a lasting mark on his thinking about the state. Throughout his career, Razzaq was sceptical of concentrated political power, whether exercised by a colonial government, a centralised post-colonial state, or a military regime. This scepticism was not libertarian in the sense of being opposed to government per se; it was rather a recognition that concentration of political power without effective accountability and without genuine representation of plural social interests tends to produce tyranny, corruption, and the suppression of human development.

This concern with the dangers of centralisation had a specific regional application. The political history of Pakistan after 1947, with the systematic marginalisation of East Bengal's Bengali-speaking majority within a state dominated by West Pakistan's military, bureaucratic, and commercial elites, was a textbook illustration of what happens when political sovereignty is concentrated in institutions that are not accountable to or representative of the full range of the population they claim to govern. Razzaq saw this dynamic clearly and early, and his political influence during the 1960s, particularly on the student movements that challenged the Ayub Khan regime, was inseparable from his teaching about the structural connections between concentrated political power, economic exploitation, and the denial of cultural identity.

His influence on the Six Points Movement, the constitutional programme advanced by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League in 1966 as a demand for Bengali autonomy within Pakistan, is documented in several accounts. The Six Points, which called for a federal system with maximum autonomy for provincial governments, separate taxation and currency regimes for

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the two wings of Pakistan, and the right of federating states to maintain paramilitary forces, represented a specific application of the general principle of distributed sovereignty to the specific situation of East Bengal. Whether Razzaq directly contributed to the formulation of the Six Points or whether his students applied his principles in developing that programme, the connection between his pluralist teaching and the constitutional demands of the Bengali autonomy movement is clear.

The Critique of Identity Politics

One of the most important and in some ways most controversial aspects of Razzaq's political thought was his critique of what we would today call identity politics: the tendency to organise political action primarily around markers of group identity, whether religious, ethnic, or linguistic, rather than around substantive programmes of political and economic change. Human rights activist Hameeda Hossain noted at the 2022 book launch that Razzaq was critical of the role of identity politics pursued by political parties, and this critique ran through his entire intellectual career.

The critique was grounded in his historical analysis of the origins of communalism in South Asia. In a 1957 essay that represents one of his most important written contributions, Razzaq argued that the religion-based political identity that had torn the subcontinent apart in 1947 was not a natural or inevitable expression of deep human needs but a historically specific and politically constructed phenomenon. The nineteenth-century Hindu and Muslim reform movements, each attempting to define its community's identity in relation to both modernity and tradition, each seeking to mobilise its community as a political actor in the new circumstances created by colonial rule, had in the process created increasingly exclusive and mutually hostile communal identities that ultimately made coexistence within a common political framework impossible.

The Gandhi-Congress approach to the communal problem, in Razzaq's analysis, had been fundamentally misconceived. Gandhi's support for the Khilafat movement, his strategy of deepening religious consciousness as a resource for political mobilisation, was premised on the belief that making both Hindus and Muslims more intensely religious would strengthen rather than weaken the bonds between them. This was, as the Daily Star analysis of Razzaq's work notes, both a symptom of the deeper problem and a foreboding of its future consequences. Religion-based political mobilisation did not create Hindu-Muslim unity; it intensified the communal identities that made unity impossible.

The lesson Razzaq drew from this history was not that religion should be excluded from public life or that religious identity was irrelevant to politics. That would have been a naive and inappropriate application of a specifically secular-liberal framework to a society where religion was deeply and genuinely important to the lived experience of the vast majority of people. The lesson was rather that political movements organised primarily around religious identity, rather than around substantive economic and political programmes, were inevitably self-defeating: they could mobilise mass energy in the short term but they could not deliver the material improvements in human welfare that genuine political progress required, and in the long term

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they served the interests of political elites who used religious emotion to distract attention from economic grievances.

This critique was equally applicable, in Razzaq's view, to Muslim communal politics and to Hindu communal politics. He was not an apologist for one community at the expense of the other. His commitment was to the intellectual honesty that the complexity of the historical record demanded, an honesty that required him to acknowledge the contributions and the failures of all parties to the South Asian political drama.

The Question of the Two-Nation Theory

One of the most complex and sensitive aspects of Razzaq's political thought is his evolving relationship to the two-nation theory: the political doctrine advanced by Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League that Hindus and Muslims constituted two separate nations and that Muslims therefore required a separate political state. As noted in the account of the Department of Political Science at the University of Dhaka, Razzaq was, like many Muslim intellectuals of his time, a supporter of the Pakistan Movement in its early phases. He had reasons for this support that were historically intelligible: the Congress movement, despite its formal commitment to Hindu-Muslim unity, had in practice been dominated by upper-caste Hindu interests, the economic marginalisation of the Muslim community in Bengal was a real and serious problem, and the two-nation theory, whatever its intellectual deficiencies, gave expression to a genuine sense of political exclusion and vulnerability.

But Razzaq's subsequent experience with Pakistan led him to a fundamental revision of this position. The Pakistan that actually emerged was not the egalitarian Muslim state that its advocates had promised; it was a state dominated by West Pakistani elites who used Islamic ideology to justify the suppression of Bengali cultural and linguistic identity and the extraction of economic resources from East Pakistan for the benefit of the western wing. The Muslim League, which had promised to be the instrument of Muslim democratic self-determination, turned out to be an organisation serving the interests of a particular class and region rather than those of the Muslim majority as a whole.

Ahmed Sofa, one of Razzaq's most distinguished students, has been described as believing that the two-nation theory was a proven mistake, while for his teacher it had been the inevitable. This formulation is subtle and important. If the two-nation theory was for Razzaq not a mistake but an inevitability, this suggests that he understood the creation of Pakistan as the historically determined outcome of specific social, economic, and political forces that had been developing in the subcontinent for a century, rather than as a correctable error that better leadership or wiser policy could have avoided. This is a more historically sophisticated position than simple denunciation of the theory as wrong; it acknowledges the real forces that produced it while retaining the capacity for critical analysis of its consequences.

What this perspective implied for the political future of East Bengal was that simply reversing the partition or re-integrating with India was neither possible nor desirable. The question was rather how to organise political life within the specific historical circumstances that the creation of Pakistan had produced, how to secure Bengali cultural and economic rights within a Pakistani

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state that was structurally predisposed to deny them, and ultimately, when that project proved impossible, how to create a new state that could do justice to the aspirations of the Bengali people.

Chapter Six: Economic Thought - Bengal's Ecology, Commerce, and Development

The Ecological Basis of Economic Life

One of the most distinctive and original aspects of Razzaq's economic thinking was his emphasis on the ecological foundations of economic organisation. Bengal is one of the world's great river delta systems, a landscape shaped by the annual flooding of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers, a landscape of extraordinary fertility and extraordinary vulnerability, capable of supporting one of the world's densest populations but also subject to catastrophic floods, cyclones, and droughts that periodically destroyed the accumulated capital of generations.

Razzaq understood that economic analysis which ignored this ecological context was fundamentally inadequate. The standard frameworks of political economy derived from European experience, whether classical, Marxist, or Keynesian, were developed in the context of continental European or British industrial societies with very different ecological conditions. The landlord-tenant relations of European feudalism, the factory system of the industrial revolution, the urban working class and its struggles: these were not directly transposable to the ecological and social realities of the Bengal delta, and political programmes derived from European experience without adequate adaptation to local conditions were likely to produce unintended and often harmful consequences.

His discussion of water management, noted at the 2022 book launch by Professor Salimullah Khan, is a case in point. Razzaq acknowledged, even in his 1950 thesis, that water management would be a major problem for the delta. This was not merely a technical observation; it was a politically significant analysis. The control of water in a delta system is inseparable from the control of agricultural production, and the control of agricultural production is inseparable from the distribution of political power. Who decides how rivers are managed, which areas receive irrigation and which are left to the mercy of annual floods, which communities bear the costs of flood control and which receive its benefits: these are not technical questions to be resolved by engineers alone but political and economic questions that cut to the heart of how power is distributed in a society.

This insight has continued contemporary relevance. Bangladesh today faces some of the world's most serious challenges of water management, from the threats of climate change-induced sea level rise and increased flooding intensity to the complex transboundary politics of water sharing with India on the major rivers. Razzaq's early insistence on the centrality of ecological and hydrological conditions to economic and political analysis represents a prescient anticipation of frameworks that have only recently become mainstream in development economics and political science.

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Trade, Handicrafts, and the Distorted Colonial Economy

Razzaq's economic thought consistently returned to the theme of Bengal's historical commercial and manufacturing achievement and its deliberate destruction by British imperial policy. This was more than a historical grievance; it was the foundation of his analysis of what post-colonial development required.

The standard colonial economic narrative, which portrayed the Bengal economy as primitive and agricultural and the British contribution as the introduction of modern commerce, industry, and economic institutions, was one that Razzaq rejected on the basis of historical evidence. The Bengal textile industry, the sophisticated commercial networks of the early modern period, the urban economies of Dhaka, Murshidabad, and other cities: all testified to the existence of a complex pre-colonial economy that was not primitive but was oriented differently from the European industrial model, organised around different principles of production, exchange, and social organisation.

The destruction of this economy was systematic. British tariff policy protected Lancashire textiles from Bengali competition while removing barriers to British manufactured goods entering the Indian market. The result was the ruin of the Bengal weaving industry and the transformation of millions of skilled textile workers into landless agricultural labourers. The commercialisation of agriculture, which required peasants to grow cash crops for export and to pay rent and taxes in cash rather than kind, created new forms of indebtedness and dependency that trapped rural families in cycles of poverty. The land settlement policies, particularly the Permanent Settlement of 1793, created a class of permanent landlords with absolute ownership rights over land that had previously been managed according to communal and customary arrangements, fundamentally altering the social structure of rural Bengal.

Razzaq's economic analysis of these processes was not merely descriptive; it carried normative and policy implications. If Bengal's poverty was the result of deliberate policy choices rather than natural conditions, then addressing that poverty required conscious policy intervention to reverse the structural damage that colonialism had inflicted. This meant not simply creating conditions for capitalist development, which might reproduce the same dynamics of concentration and exclusion that colonial capitalism had created, but developing forms of economic organisation that were appropriate to Bangladesh's specific ecological conditions, social structures, and historical experience.

The Critique of Post-Colonial Economic Policy

Razzaq's most extended public engagement with economic policy questions came in his lecture "Bangladesh: State of the Nation," delivered in 1980, nine years after the creation of Bangladesh. The lecture, later published and the subject of a book-length analysis by Salimullah Khan, provides the most complete available account of his views on the specific challenges of the new Bangladeshi state.

The lecture addressed several interconnected economic and political problems. It examined the economic challenges facing the new state, including the devastation caused by the Liberation

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War, the structural problems of agricultural organisation and rural poverty, the challenges of industrial development in an economy with limited capital and industrial infrastructure, and the distortions created by the politics of aid dependency and the interests of international donors.

It addressed the political problems of state consolidation, including the dangers of political violence, the tensions between democratic aspirations and the practical demands of governance, the risks of military intervention in civilian politics, and the challenge of building functional political institutions in the aftermath of colonial rule and a devastating war.

And it addressed the cultural and identity questions that the creation of Bangladesh had both resolved and reopened. The creation of an independent Bangladesh had established beyond question the primacy of Bengali cultural identity over Islamic political unity as the organising principle of the new state. But it had not resolved the questions of what Bengali Muslim identity meant, how the Islamic tradition should relate to the secular nationalist framework of the new state, and how the diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural communities within Bangladesh were to relate to each other and to the dominant Bengali-speaking Muslim majority.

Razzaq's analysis of these questions was characteristically honest and uncomfortable. He did not offer easy reassurances or simple prescriptions. He identified structural problems that would persist regardless of which political party was in power, drew attention to tendencies toward power concentration and authoritarianism that were visible in the new state's political culture, and warned against the temptation to substitute military discipline for political legitimacy. His warnings proved prescient: the years following the lecture saw a period of military rule under Ziaur Rahman and later Hussain Muhammad Ershad that confirmed his analysis of the dangers he had identified.

Chapter Seven: The Teacher of Teachers - Pedagogy as Philosophy

What It Meant to Teach in the Razzaq Style

Razzaq's reputation as a teacher rests on a paradox: he taught through conversation rather than through formal lectures, he influenced people more through question and challenge than through exposition of conclusions, and he left behind no lecture notes, no published course materials, no official record of what he taught. Yet his influence on the intellectual development of multiple generations of students was, by all accounts, profound and lasting. Understanding what this influence consisted of and how it was exercised is essential to understanding Razzaq as a philosophical figure.

The accounts of his students are remarkably consistent in emphasising several features of his pedagogical approach. First, he took his students seriously as intellectual interlocutors. He did not condescend to them, did not treat them as empty vessels to be filled with information, did not dismiss their questions as naive or their challenges as impertinent. He engaged with what they said, took their ideas to their logical conclusions and showed where those conclusions led, and expected them to do the same with his ideas. This pedagogical respect was not universal in the

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academic culture of his time and place, and it created an intellectual environment in which students felt genuinely invited to think rather than merely to absorb.

Second, he encouraged breadth of reading. The advice attributed to Laski and transmitted by Razzaq, to "go and soak," captures an approach to intellectual formation that is explicitly opposed to the narrowing specialisation that academic discipline requirements encourage. To soak is to immerse oneself, to allow the full range of available knowledge to be absorbed, to resist the premature closure of inquiry that follows from too early a commitment to a particular disciplinary framework or ideological position. Razzaq's own reading was famously eclectic, and he communicated to his students the conviction that genuine understanding of any serious question required engagement with a wider range of materials than any single discipline could provide.

Third, he was willing to share his personal intellectual conclusions, however uncomfortable. His analysis of the two-nation theory, his critique of religious identity politics, his assessment of the Congress leadership, his judgments about the economic causes of Bengal's poverty: these were not sanitised or hedged academic positions but genuine intellectual convictions based on serious historical and analytical work. The willingness to commit to positions, to be honest about what one actually believed rather than retreating into academic neutrality, is one of the distinguishing features of a teacher who treats intellectual life as a serious moral engagement rather than merely a professional activity.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, he modelled the intellectual virtues he sought to cultivate. The humility of a man who knew how much he did not know, who admitted uncertainty openly and refused to claim more confidence than his evidence warranted, who sent students back to the library rather than giving them pre-packaged answers, was itself a pedagogical demonstration of what genuine intellectual integrity looked like. The students who emerged from the Razzaq tradition were not trained to be disciples of their teacher's positions; they were trained to be independent thinkers who had learned from their teacher how to think, not what to think.

The Range of His Influence

The range of students who have acknowledged Razzaq's influence is itself astonishing evidence of his intellectual scope and impact. Badruddin Umar, who became one of Bangladesh's most important Marxist historians; Anisuzzaman, one of the country's most distinguished scholars of Bengali literature and culture; Rehman Sobhan, who became a leading development economist and a major voice on economic policy; Nilima Ibrahim, a pioneering scholar of women's liberation and the experience of women during the Liberation War; Rounaq Jahan, a distinguished political scientist at Columbia University and a leading analyst of Bangladeshi politics; Sardar Fazlul Karim, a philosopher and translator who became one of the principal transmitters of Razzaq's thought; Ahmed Sofa, one of Bangladesh's most important novelists, poets, and essayists; Shamsur Rahman, widely regarded as one of the greatest Bengali poets of the twentieth century; Hameeda Hossain, a major human rights activist and intellectual; Serajul Islam Choudhury, a scholar of English literature who became one of Bangladesh's most influential cultural critics: these are not all students who agreed with each other or who followed the same intellectual paths. They are minds of genuinely diverse orientations, working in

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different disciplines and arriving at different conclusions. What they shared was the formative influence of a teacher who showed them what serious intellectual engagement looked like.

The claim that Razzaq had as his students more than seventy members of parliament, including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, indicates that his influence extended beyond the strictly academic world into the political domain. This was not coincidental. Razzaq taught at a university that was, throughout the period of Pakistani rule, one of the principal sites of Bengali political consciousness and political organisation. The students who came through his seminars were not studying political science as a career preparation for non-political roles; they were studying it precisely because they were politically engaged, because they wanted to understand the world they were living in and to participate actively in its transformation. A teacher who could help them understand that world more clearly, who could provide them with analytical tools appropriate to its complexity, who could challenge their received opinions and help them develop more rigorous and honest assessments of the political situation: such a teacher was, in the Bangladesh context, directly contributing to the quality of the political decisions that shaped the country's history.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's acknowledgment of Razzaq as his teacher and the government of Bangladesh's honouring of Razzaq with the title of National Professor in 1975 were not merely formal gestures of official recognition. They were acknowledgments of a specific intellectual debt: the recognition that the ideas and analytical frameworks that had shaped the political leadership of the independence movement had been developed in dialogue with this remarkable teacher, and that the achievement of independence was in part an intellectual achievement that owed something to the quality of the thinking that Razzaq had helped to develop in his students.

Chapter Eight: Oriental Studies and Historical Consciousness

Razzaq's Approach to Historical Understanding

Among the various intellectual domains in which Razzaq's expertise was acknowledged, his deep engagement with the history and civilisations of the Orient stands out as particularly distinctive. His engagement with oriental studies was not merely academic in the conventional sense; it was an expression of his conviction that understanding the present required the deepest possible understanding of the historical traditions that had shaped it.

The term "oriental studies" in Razzaq's context needs some careful unpacking. In its colonial context, "oriental studies" was associated with the British scholarly tradition of Orientalism, which Edward Said's famous 1978 analysis identified as a form of knowledge production that served imperial purposes by constructing an image of "the East" as timeless, irrational, despotic, and essentially different from "the West." Said's critique, which has become enormously influential in postcolonial studies, raises important questions about the politics of cross-cultural knowledge and the ways in which apparently neutral scholarly inquiry can be implicated in structures of power.

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Razzaq's engagement with oriental history and civilisation was not Orientalist in Said's critical sense. He was not constructing a flattering image of "the West" against a diminished image of "the East." He was rather recovering the historical depth and civilisational complexity of South Asian and Islamic traditions in order to challenge the colonial narrative of Western superiority and Eastern backwardness. His knowledge of Islamic intellectual history, of the philosophical and scientific achievements of the classical Islamic period, of the complex traditions of governance, jurisprudence, and scholarship that had developed in the Muslim world over more than a millennium, gave him a perspective on modernity and its claims that was unavailable to people whose intellectual formation had been entirely shaped by European sources.

At the same time, Razzaq was not a traditionalist who idealised the pre-colonial past and sought to restore it unchanged. His engagement with the history of the subcontinent was critical and analytical, not nostalgic or romantic. He understood that the traditions he studied had their own internal tensions and contradictions, their own histories of development and decline, their own forms of oppression and exclusion. He approached them with the same critical intelligence he brought to European intellectual traditions: not as sources of authority to be deferred to but as objects of serious historical inquiry and critical evaluation.

Balliol, Oxford, and Indo-British Relations

In 1968, Razzaq was invited to Balliol College, Oxford, where he worked on editing documentation on Indo-British relations during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This invitation is significant on several levels. Balliol was one of Oxford's most prestigious colleges, with a long tradition of engagement with questions of empire, governance, and the relationship between Britain and its colonial territories. To be invited to Balliol to work on the historical documentation of Indo-British relations was a recognition of Razzaq's standing as a serious historian with unusual competence in this area.

The period on which he worked, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was precisely the period during which the fundamental transformation of the relationship between Bengal and Britain occurred: the period of the East India Company's conquest and consolidation of power, the establishment of the colonial administrative framework, the economic policies that destroyed Bengal's textile industry, the land settlements that restructured rural social relations, and the educational reforms that shaped the intellectual formation of the Bengali middle class. To work on the historical documentation of these processes was to engage directly with the material history of the forces that had shaped Bangladesh's present.

His work at Oxford also brought him into direct engagement with the British scholarly tradition on these questions, giving him an inside view of how British historians and archivists understood and represented the history of British rule in India. The critical perspective he brought to that tradition, informed by his knowledge of what that rule had actually meant for the people who experienced it, must have been a valuable counterpoint to the more apologetic accounts that dominated British imperial historiography.

The result of this work, the edited documentation on Indo-British relations, represents one of the few instances where Razzaq's scholarship left a direct institutional trace. The documentation is

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important not just for its historical content but for what it represents methodologically: a commitment to working with primary sources, to grounding historical claims in archival evidence, and to subjecting the interpretation of historical events to the discipline of the documentary record.

The Harvard Fellowship and Comparative Political Analysis

Between 1959 and 1960, Razzaq was a visiting fellow at Harvard University, one of the world's great centres of social science research. This fellowship provided an opportunity for engagement with American academic political science and development economics at a particularly important moment: the late 1950s and early 1960s were the period of the great modernisation theory debate in American social science, during which scholars like Walt Rostow, Gabriel Almond, and others were developing frameworks for understanding the political and economic development of what was then called the "Third World."

Modernisation theory, broadly speaking, argued that developing countries would follow a developmental path similar to that of the Western industrialised nations, moving through stages of economic growth and political liberalisation that would eventually produce democratic capitalist societies resembling Western models. This framework was, in Razzaq's view, seriously misleading: it projected a specifically Western historical experience onto very different societies with very different historical trajectories, and it served ideological purposes (particularly in the context of the Cold War competition for influence in developing countries) that were at odds with the requirements of honest social analysis.

The Harvard fellowship gave Razzaq direct access to the most sophisticated available versions of these theories and an opportunity to test his own analysis against them in dialogue with some of the world's leading social scientists. His exposure to the comparative politics tradition, with its emphasis on systematic cross-national comparison and its attempt to identify general patterns in political development, also influenced his own thinking, even as he remained critical of the specific frameworks that American political science was developing.

Chapter Nine: Jurisprudence and Constitutional Thought

Constitutional Adviser to East Pakistan

One of the most practically significant aspects of Razzaq's career was his role as adviser to the East Pakistani members of the constituent assembly during the framing of Pakistan's first constitution in 1956. This role brought him into direct engagement with the practical challenges of constitutional design, with the specific questions of how sovereignty was to be distributed between the federal and provincial governments, how the rights of minority communities were to be protected, how the relationship between Islamic law and civil law was to be resolved, and how the fundamental document of a new state was to be drafted in ways that were both legally sound and politically acceptable.

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The Pakistani constitutional debates of the 1950s were among the most complex and contentious in the history of post-colonial constitutionalism. Pakistan faced a set of challenges that were in some ways unique: it was a state created explicitly in the name of Islamic identity, but its constitution had to govern a complex, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic society in which the relationship between Islamic law and civil governance was highly contested. It was a federal state in theory but increasingly centralised in practice, with the central government dominated by West Pakistani interests that were resistant to genuine provincial autonomy. And it was a state in which the formal institutions of democratic governance, the parliament, the courts, the civil service, were in constant tension with the informal power of the military establishment, which had emerged from the colonial period as the most cohesive and capable institution in the new state.

Razzaq's role as constitutional adviser gave him the opportunity to apply his understanding of political theory, comparative constitutional law, and the specific historical circumstances of Pakistan to the practical work of drafting a constitutional document. His advocacy for federal principles, for genuine provincial autonomy, for constitutional protections of fundamental rights and cultural identities, was informed by his theoretical understanding of the relationship between sovereignty, democracy, and human rights, as well as by his historical analysis of the structural factors that were already pushing Pakistan toward political crisis.

The 1956 constitution, which Razzaq helped to advise, was itself a compromise document that satisfied no one completely and lasted only until 1958, when General Ayub Khan seized power in a military coup and abrogated the constitution. But the process of its drafting was an important exercise in constitutional thought, and Razzaq's participation in it gave him insights into the practical dynamics of power and governance that purely academic analysis could not have provided.

The Relationship Between Law, Power, and Democracy

Razzaq's jurisprudential thinking, as reconstructed from his oral teachings and the accounts of his students, was fundamentally concerned with the relationship between legal forms and social realities, between the formal structures of constitutional government and the actual distribution of power in a society. He was deeply sceptical of the tendency, common among lawyers and constitutionalists, to treat legal documents as if their words had autonomous effects independent of the social, economic, and political context in which they operated.

A constitution that guaranteed democratic rights but did not address the economic structures that made the exercise of those rights impossible in practice was, in Razzaq's analysis, insufficient and potentially deceptive: it created the appearance of democratic governance while leaving the substance of power in the hands of those who controlled economic resources. This insight connected his constitutional thinking to his broader economic and political analysis: the question of who actually exercises power in a society is not answered by reading the constitution but by understanding the economic organisation of that society, the distribution of property and income, the structures of dependence and independence that determine how people can actually exercise their formal rights.

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At the same time, Razzaq was not dismissive of legal and constitutional frameworks. He understood that formal legal structures, while insufficient to guarantee democratic outcomes by themselves, were necessary preconditions for democratic governance. A society without the rule of law, without constitutional protections of fundamental rights, without independent judicial institutions capable of holding power accountable, was a society in which the powerful could act without constraint and the weak had no recourse. The challenge was to develop legal and constitutional frameworks that were both formally sound and substantively adequate to the social realities they purported to govern.

His concern with the rule of law was also connected to his analysis of the colonial period and its legacy. One of the most damaging legacies of colonial rule was the establishment of a legal framework that served imperial rather than popular interests, that was designed to facilitate the extraction of resources from the colony rather than to protect the rights of its population, and that created habits of legal instrumentalism, using law as a tool of power rather than as a constraint upon it, that proved difficult to overcome in the post-colonial period.

Islamic Jurisprudence and Modern Governance

A particularly complex aspect of Razzaq's jurisprudential thinking concerns the relationship between Islamic jurisprudence and modern governance. Pakistan was created as an Islamic state, and the question of how Islamic law was to be incorporated into the constitutional framework of a modern state was one of the central issues in Pakistani constitutional debates. Bangladesh, after 1971, faced a different version of the same question: how was the Islamic identity of the majority population to be expressed in the constitutional and legal framework of a secular nationalist state?

Razzaq's approach to this question was characteristically nuanced and historically informed. He did not adopt either the simple secularist position, which held that religion should be entirely excluded from the public sphere, or the simple Islamist position, which held that the shariah should be directly applied as positive law. Both of these positions, in his view, failed to engage adequately with the historical complexity of the relationship between Islamic jurisprudence and political governance.

The Islamic jurisprudential tradition, as Razzaq understood it from his study of Islamic intellectual history, was not a simple or monolithic body of law but a rich and complex tradition of legal reasoning that had developed over more than a millennium in response to changing social, political, and economic circumstances. The four major schools of Sunni jurisprudence, the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools, as well as the Shi'i tradition, had developed different approaches to legal interpretation and had reached different conclusions on many specific questions, demonstrating that Islamic jurisprudence was not a fixed code but a living tradition of reasoning about the relationship between divine guidance and human social organisation.

This historical understanding had important implications for how one thought about the relationship between Islamic law and modern governance. If the Islamic jurisprudential tradition was a tradition of reasoning rather than a fixed code, then the question was not whether to apply

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a fixed Islamic law but how to engage with the principles and methods of that tradition in addressing the specific challenges of contemporary governance. This was a much more complex and intellectually demanding task than either simple secularism or simple Islamism required, and it was one for which Razzaq's combination of historical knowledge, philosophical sophistication, and political realism made him unusually well-qualified.

Chapter Ten: Psychology, Character, and the Inner Life of an Intellectual

The Psychology of the Perpetual Student

To understand Razzaq fully as a human being and as an intellectual type, it is worth reflecting on the psychological dimensions of his distinctive intellectual character. The choice to remain a learner throughout one's life, to continue reading, questioning, and revising one's understanding even after achieving the level of knowledge and recognition that would justify most people in settling into authoritative conclusions, is not a natural or easy choice. It requires a specific psychological constitution: a genuine love of the process of learning for its own sake rather than for the ends it serves, a tolerance for uncertainty and incompleteness, a willingness to remain in the state of productive doubt that Razzaq's advice to "go and soak" expresses, and a degree of genuine intellectual humility that is not merely performative but structurally built into one's way of relating to knowledge.

The psychological literature on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation is relevant here. Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to engage in an activity for its own sake, because the activity itself is rewarding, rather than for external rewards like money, reputation, or social approval. Razzaq's intellectual life appears to have been driven almost entirely by intrinsic motivation: by genuine curiosity, genuine love of understanding, genuine engagement with the questions that he found interesting and important. This is why the failure to publish and the failure to complete his doctorate, which would have been catastrophic to someone motivated primarily by external recognition, were evidently not catastrophic to him. He was not in the business of producing a professional career; he was in the business of pursuing understanding.

This psychological orientation is connected to the philosophical concept of eudaimonia, or human flourishing, as Aristotle understood it. For Aristotle, the highest human good was not pleasure in the sensory sense, nor power, nor wealth, nor even simple happiness, but the full exercise of distinctively human capacities at their highest level. For a person with exceptional intellectual capacities, this meant the full exercise of those capacities in the sustained pursuit of understanding, the activity that Aristotle called theoria, contemplative inquiry into the nature of things. Razzaq's life exemplifies this Aristotelian ideal in a striking way: he identified the full exercise of his intellectual capacities as his highest purpose and organised his life around the pursuit of that purpose with remarkable consistency.

The Social Dimensions of His Character

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At the same time, Razzaq was not a pure contemplative in the monkish sense, withdrawn from the world and indifferent to human connection. All accounts of him emphasise his delight in conversation, his wit, his ability to enliven intellectual discussion with humour and storytelling, his genuine interest in the lives and thoughts of the people he encountered. The former finance secretary Syeduzzaman's account of his conversations with Razzaq conveys a man who was deeply engaged with the world, curious about economics and governance not as abstract subjects but as practical dimensions of human welfare, and who expressed his insight and analysis through a conversational style that was simultaneously rigorous and entertaining.

His habit of playing chess at the Dhaka University teachers' lounge, noted in Syeduzzaman's account, is a small but revealing detail. Chess is a game that demands both deep analytical thinking and a certain kind of playful engagement with an adversary; it combines the qualities of a serious intellectual exercise with the pleasures of a social interaction. It is also a game that rewards a particular type of strategic intelligence, the ability to think several moves ahead while remaining alert to unexpected developments, an intelligence that mirrors, in some respects, the kind of political and historical analysis that Razzaq practiced.

The combination of intellectual seriousness and social delight, of deep learning and warm human engagement, was precisely what made him such an effective teacher. Students were not intimidated or depressed by the depth of his knowledge; they were drawn in by his evident pleasure in intellectual encounter and his genuine respect for their developing minds. The humour that appears in several accounts of his conversation, including the famous response about Fazle Hasan Abed's proposed university ("Ask Abed to establish 100 good schools instead"), was not a defensive deflection from intellectual seriousness but an expression of a wisdom that had learned not to take the pretensions of institutional status too solemnly.

Solitude and Reflection

The Banglapedia account's observation that pensive mood, when alone, was Razzaq's normal demeanour, balanced by his witty and hilarious spirit while talking to intellectual pupils, reveals a man of two equally genuine dimensions: the private contemplative and the engaged conversationalist. This combination is psychologically coherent: deep contemplation and genuine intellectual encounter are complementary rather than contradictory. The periods of private reflection and reading provide the substance and the depth that make genuine intellectual conversation possible; the conversations, in turn, test and develop the insights gained through private study.

This alternation between solitude and engagement is characteristic of the greatest intellectual traditions of both the East and the West. The Islamic tradition of khalwa, or seclusion for purposes of spiritual and intellectual concentration, the Hindu ideal of the scholar who retreats from worldly distraction to pursue knowledge, the Western philosophical tradition of the scholarly life as a form of contemplative vocation: all of these recognise that genuine intellectual achievement requires both sustained private effort and active engagement with other minds. Razzaq's life embodied this recognition in a way that was, for his students and admirers, a living demonstration of what the intellectual vocation looked like when fully realised.

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Chapter Eleven: Controversies and Critical Assessments

The Problem of the Absent Text

The most fundamental controversy surrounding Razzaq is the one that we have already noted: the contrast between the enormous influence attributed to him and the almost complete absence of published work through which that influence can be directly assessed. This is not merely a biographical puzzle; it is a philosophical problem about the nature of intellectual influence and the criteria by which we evaluate intellectual achievement.

The conventional academic framework for assessing intellectual achievement is primarily textual: we evaluate thinkers by their published works, by the quality of their arguments as expressed in writing, by their contributions to the accumulated written discourse of their disciplines. A thinker who has published nothing has, by this criterion, contributed nothing to the written record and therefore cannot be assessed as an intellectual figure. The fact that Razzaq's formal written production consists of a few essays, lectures, and an unpublished thesis makes him almost invisible by this criterion.

But this criterion, appropriate as it may be for evaluating certain kinds of intellectual contribution, is inadequate for evaluating Razzaq's specific kind of influence. The oral tradition in intellectual life, the tradition of teaching, conversation, and personal intellectual influence, is not less real than the written tradition; it is differently structured and differently transmitted. Ideas that are communicated in conversation can be as rigorous, as original, and as consequential as ideas communicated in published texts; they are simply preserved and transmitted differently, through the memories and works of those who encountered them.

The entire body of work of Sardar Fazlul Karim, Ahmed Sofa, Badruddin Umar, Anisuzzaman, Rehman Sobhan, Rounaq Jahan, and the many other distinguished thinkers who acknowledge Razzaq's influence is, in a very real sense, part of Razzaq's intellectual legacy. To assess his intellectual contribution, one must read not just his own thin portfolio of written work but the vast body of work that bears the mark of his influence. This is an unusual and challenging methodological task, but it is not an impossible one, and it is what this textbook attempts.

The Mythologisation Problem

A related controversy concerns what the review essay in the Journal of Global South Asia Dialogue (referenced in the academic commentary on "Political Parties in India") calls the "mythical presence" of Razzaq in Bangladeshi intellectual culture. The essay notes that followers of Razzaq perpetuate and perhaps create his mystical aura as the philosophical architect of Bangladesh, and it raises the question of whether the influence attributed to him is historically accurate or whether it has been amplified by the hagiographic tendencies of his admirers.

This is a legitimate scholarly concern. The dynamics of intellectual myth-making are well-documented: great teachers become, after their deaths, the objects of a retrospective attribution

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of insight and influence that exceeds what the historical record can actually support. The Socrates analogy is relevant here: the historical Socrates is largely inaccessible to us, filtered through the creative imagination of Plato, and much of what we think we know about Socrates is actually Plato's construction. Similarly, much of what we know about Razzaq is filtered through the memories and interpretations of his students, who had strong personal and intellectual reasons for magnifying his importance.

The publication of "Political Parties in India" in 2022 provides, for the first time, a text that can be analysed independently of the oral tradition, a document that allows scholars to assess Razzaq's actual intellectual achievements rather than relying entirely on the accounts of his admirers. The academic reviews of the book, including the review forum in the Journal of Global South Asia Dialogue, represent the beginning of a more critical scholarly engagement with his work that moves beyond hagiography toward genuine intellectual assessment.

The reviews reveal both the genuine strength of Razzaq's historical and political analysis and some of its limitations. The thesis was written in 1950, drawing on the scholarship available at that time, and some of its historical claims have been superseded by subsequent research. Its engagement with the question of the intelligentsia's relationship to the British administration raises questions about self-reflexivity that the thesis does not fully address. And, as the commentary notes, there are questions about whether Razzaq's analysis of political parties is primarily descriptive or normative, whether he is claiming that Indian political parties have historically lacked democratic character or that they necessarily lack it.

The Question of Political Influence versus Academic Achievement

Another dimension of the controversy surrounding Razzaq concerns the relationship between his political influence and his academic achievement. His influence on the student movements of the 1960s, on the intellectual formation of the Awami League leadership, on the political consciousness that drove the Bangladesh Liberation War, is widely acknowledged. But political influence and academic achievement are not the same thing, and there is a question about whether Razzaq's historical importance is primarily political or primarily intellectual.

The answer, suggested by the evidence, is that the distinction itself is misleading in his case. For Razzaq, intellectual analysis and political engagement were not separate activities; they were dimensions of a single commitment to understanding the world in order to act in it more wisely. His teaching was politically engaged not because he was primarily a political operator who used academic cover but because he understood, correctly, that the quality of political decision-making is inseparable from the quality of political understanding, and that improving the political understanding of the people who would make the decisions that shaped his country's future was itself a profound political contribution.

The attempt by the Ayub regime to dismiss him from his teaching position on the grounds that he was not mindful of his duties as a teacher is itself evidence that his political enemies understood the political significance of his intellectual activity. The regime's failure to establish this charge in court is equally significant: it indicates that his intellectual integrity, the fact that he was

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genuinely a serious academic doing serious intellectual work, was not deniable even by his political opponents.

Controversies About His Position on Partition and Pakistan

As noted earlier, Razzaq's early support for the Pakistan Movement and his subsequent disillusionment with the direction that Pakistan took are both historically documented and politically sensitive. Different intellectual and political traditions in Bangladesh have interpreted this trajectory in different ways.

For some, his early support for Pakistan disqualifies him as a guide for thinking about Bengali identity and the independence movement: how can someone who supported the two-nation theory be the intellectual architect of Bangladesh? For others, his evolution from Pakistan supporter to advocate of Bengali autonomy and ultimately of independence illustrates a broader truth about the Bengali Muslim intellectual journey: the recognition, earned through painful experience, that Islamic political unity and Bengali cultural identity were incompatible, and that the latter deserved priority.

Razzaq's own analysis, as reconstructed from his students' accounts, took neither of these simple positions. He understood the Pakistan Movement as historically intelligible given the political circumstances of the 1940s, while recognising that its premises were flawed and its consequences disastrous. He understood the Bangladesh independence movement as the necessary response to those flawed premises and those disastrous consequences, while insisting that independence was not a final resolution of the underlying questions about Bengali Muslim identity but rather a new context in which those questions had to be worked out.

This nuanced position is uncomfortable for those who want simple heroes and villains, clear lines between right thinking and wrong thinking, unambiguous intellectual authority. But it is precisely this discomfort that makes Razzaq's perspective valuable: a perspective that acknowledges the genuine complexity of history, that resists the temptation to apply retrospective clarity to situations that were genuinely uncertain, is more useful for understanding and navigating the present than a simpler and more satisfying but less honest account.

Chapter Twelve: Razzaq in Comparative Perspective - Global Intellectual Traditions

Razzaq and the Tradition of the Non-Writing Intellectual

To appreciate the full significance of Razzaq's intellectual model, it is useful to situate him in the broader global tradition of thinkers who have exercised profound influence through oral rather than written modes of intellectual transmission. This tradition includes figures across cultures and historical periods who have understood that the living encounter between minds, the immediate dialectic of question and answer, challenge and response, is a more powerful vehicle for genuine intellectual development than the one-way transmission of written text.

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Socrates has already been mentioned. The comparison is apt in several respects, including the refusal to write, the dialectical method, the centrality of the teacher-student relationship, and the willingness to challenge received opinion regardless of the political risks involved. But there are other comparisons that illuminate different aspects of Razzaq's intellectual character.

The tradition of the great Islamic scholars who taught primarily through oral transmission, through the halqa (circle) of students who gathered around a master to receive knowledge, is particularly relevant. In the classical Islamic educational tradition, the transmission of knowledge was fundamentally personal: what mattered was not just the content of what was taught but the chain of authority through which it was transmitted, the isnad or chain of transmission that connected the student to the teacher and through the teacher to earlier authorities. This tradition valued the personal encounter between teacher and student not merely as a pedagogical convenience but as an essential feature of genuine intellectual transmission, because certain aspects of understanding can only be conveyed in the living interaction between persons and cannot be reduced to writing without loss.

Razzaq's knowledge of Islamic intellectual history would have made him aware of this tradition, and there are aspects of his pedagogical practice that echo it. The emphasis on the personal relationship between teacher and student, the importance of the teacher's entire way of being as a model for the student, the oral transmission of insights and perspectives that are not fully reducible to written propositions: all of these are features that Razzaq shared with the great teachers of the classical Islamic tradition.

Razzaq and Antonio Gramsci's "Organic Intellectual"

The Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, writing from prison in the 1930s, developed the concept of the "organic intellectual" to describe a type of intellectual whose theoretical activity is organically connected to the class and social movement from which he or she emerges, rather than being detached from any specific social group in the manner of the "traditional intellectual" of academic culture. The organic intellectual, in Gramsci's framework, does not merely think about society from a position of scholarly detachment; he or she participates actively in the intellectual life of a social movement, helping to develop its theoretical self-understanding and to connect its practical activity to broader historical and analytical frameworks.

Razzaq is not straightforwardly an organic intellectual in Gramsci's sense, because his relationship to social movements and political organisations was more that of a teacher and adviser than of a participant or organiser. But there is something of the organic intellectual about him in the sense that his intellectual work was organically connected to the specific social and political situation of the Bengali Muslim middle class in the twentieth century, and in the sense that his theoretical activity was continuously oriented toward the practical questions that his community faced rather than toward the purely academic questions of a detached scholarly tradition.

The concept of the "traditional intellectual" is also relevant here. Gramsci described the traditional intellectual as someone who presents himself as independent of any particular class

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interest, as a neutral arbiter of truth, and whose social function is to provide ideological legitimation for the dominant social order. Razzaq was explicitly not this kind of intellectual. He was committed to honest analysis rather than ideological legitimation, and his analysis consistently challenged, rather than legitimated, the claims of dominant powers, whether British colonialism, Pakistani centralism, or Bangladeshi authoritarianism.

Razzaq and the Postcolonial Intellectual Tradition

The academic discipline of postcolonial studies, which developed from the 1970s and 1980s onward through the work of scholars like Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and many others, provides another framework for situating Razzaq's intellectual achievement. Postcolonial theory is concerned with the cultural and intellectual legacies of colonialism, with the ways in which colonial power relations have shaped not just economic and political structures but forms of knowledge, ways of thinking, and criteria of intellectual validity.

Razzaq was not a postcolonial theorist in the academic sense; he did not write in the framework of the academic discipline of postcolonial studies. But he was, in practice, doing something very similar to what postcolonial theory aims at: he was challenging the intellectual authority of the colonial framework, recovering the historical depth and complexity of pre-colonial and non-Western traditions, insisting on the value of locally-grounded knowledge rather than universal theories derived from specifically European experience, and developing analytical frameworks adequate to the specific historical and social realities of South Asia rather than simply importing and applying European frameworks.

His engagement with Laski's democratic socialist tradition is a case in point. He did not simply accept Laski's framework and apply it to Bengali conditions; he adapted and modified it in light of the specific historical knowledge he brought to it, retaining what was analytically valuable and modifying or rejecting what was inappropriate to the South Asian context. This is precisely the kind of critically selective engagement with Western intellectual traditions that postcolonial theory calls for, and Razzaq practiced it fifty years before the academic discipline that would describe it existed.

The recent (2022-2025) scholarly interest in "Political Parties in India" and in Razzaq's intellectual legacy more broadly is partly an expression of the growing influence of postcolonial frameworks in South Asian and Bangladeshi academic culture. Scholars are now better equipped to recognize what was distinctive and valuable about Razzaq's intellectual approach, better able to appreciate the specific contribution of a mind that engaged seriously with both the Western intellectual tradition and the specific historical realities of the Bengal delta.

Chapter Thirteen: The Personal Library and the Architecture of Razzaq's Mind

Books as Windows and as Companions

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The personal library that Razzaq spent his lifetime building deserves extended consideration as an intellectual artefact, as a material expression of the architecture of a remarkable mind. The Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation's account of the library describes it as reflecting the imagination and inquisitiveness of a rich and restless mind with eclectic curiosities, aesthetic inclinations, cosmopolitan sensibilities, and the intellectual orientations provoked and sustained by the European Enlightenment project.

The reference to the European Enlightenment is important. The Enlightenment project, broadly understood, was the project of applying reason, critical inquiry, and empirical evidence to the full range of human experience, including questions of religion, politics, economics, and morality that had previously been understood as matters of divine revelation or established authority. The Enlightenment valorised individual reason, free inquiry, tolerance of intellectual diversity, and the capacity of human beings to improve their condition through the application of intelligence to their problems.

Razzaq absorbed this Enlightenment orientation deeply and applied it consistently throughout his intellectual life. His commitment to critical inquiry, his refusal to accept received opinions without examination, his tolerance of intellectual diversity, his insistence on following arguments wherever they led regardless of the conclusions they produced: all of these are expressions of the Enlightenment intellectual ideal as he had internalized it. At the same time, he brought to this Enlightenment orientation a non-Western perspective that saw its limitations as well as its strengths, that recognised the ways in which the Enlightenment project had been complicit with European imperialism, and that insisted on the need to develop forms of critical reason appropriate to the specific conditions of South Asian intellectual life rather than simply adopting European frameworks wholesale.

The cosmopolitan sensibilities noted in the Foundation's account of the library are equally significant. Cosmopolitanism, in the philosophical tradition from the Stoics to Kant to contemporary thinkers like Martha Nussbaum and Kwame Anthony Appiah, refers to the orientation of a person who sees himself or herself as a citizen of the world rather than merely of a particular nation or community, who is interested in and respectful of the diversity of human cultures and traditions, and who recognises the shared humanity that underlies that diversity. Razzaq's intellectual cosmopolitanism, his engagement with traditions of thought from Europe, from the Islamic world, from Hindu classical tradition, from Chinese and other Asian civilisations, was an expression of this orientation: the conviction that genuine understanding of human life requires engagement with the full range of human intellectual achievement rather than confinement within the boundaries of a single tradition.

The Library as Legacy

The decision to preserve Razzaq's library as the foundation for an intellectual institution devoted to advancing the values he embodied was itself a philosophical statement. In most contexts, a person's library would be distributed among family members, sold, or donated to institutional collections where it would be absorbed into existing holdings and lose its identity as the product of a specific intellectual life. The choice to keep the collection together, to make it available to

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scholars as a unified collection that reflects the specific intellectual orientation of a specific mind, recognised something important about what the collection was.

A great scholar's personal library is not merely a collection of books; it is an intellectual autobiography. The specific combination of books that a person chooses to own and read, the way different fields and traditions are represented in the collection, the relationship between what is present and what is absent: these choices reveal the intellectual priorities and preoccupations of the collector in ways that a conventional biography cannot fully capture. To engage with Razzaq's library is to engage, in a distinctive way, with the structure of his mind, to understand not just what he knew but how he organised and related his knowledge.

The Abdur Razzaq Foundation, established in 2002, has preserved this legacy and made it available to a new generation of scholars. Its activities include supporting research students, maintaining the library as a resource for scholars and researchers, and organising events and publications that engage with Razzaq's ideas in relation to contemporary intellectual and political questions. The Foundation's existence ensures that his legacy is not merely preserved but actively engaged with, that the intellectual tradition he embodied continues to develop rather than being simply memorialized.

Chapter Fourteen: Legacy and Contemporary Relevance

The Continuing Relevance of His Political Analysis

Perhaps the most striking testimony to the quality of Razzaq's analysis is its continuing relevance to contemporary Bangladeshi and South Asian politics. The problems he identified in his 1980 lecture "Bangladesh: State of the Nation," the dangers of political violence, the tendency toward power concentration and authoritarianism, the role of the military in civilian politics, the challenge of building functional democratic institutions, the risks of identity politics, the structural problems of economic development in a delta ecology: all of these have remained central problems of Bangladeshi political life in the decades since his death.

The observation by speaker after speaker at the 2022 launch of "Political Parties in India" that Razzaq's thoughts were still relevant because political parties had made power a life-and-death matter speaks directly to the continuing failure of Bangladeshi politics to develop the kind of genuinely democratic, programme-oriented political parties that Razzaq had argued were essential to democratic governance. The concentration of political power in the hands of competing elites, the use of state resources for partisan advantage, the suppression of political opposition, the subordination of economic policy to the demands of political loyalty: these are patterns that Razzaq had identified and analysed in the specific context of the Indian subcontinent but which have a universality that extends to many other post-colonial societies.

His analysis of the relationship between economic development and ecological conditions is also of growing contemporary relevance. Bangladesh faces some of the world's most severe challenges of climate adaptation, from rising sea levels to increased flooding intensity to the

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disruption of the agricultural systems that still sustain the livelihoods of a large proportion of the population. The need for development strategies that are genuinely appropriate to the specific ecological conditions of the Bangladesh delta, rather than simply imported from international agencies with more generic frameworks, is precisely the kind of thinking that Razzaq's approach to economic analysis would support and inform.

The Educational Legacy

Razzaq's educational legacy is perhaps even more tangible than his political one. The generations of teachers, scholars, researchers, civil servants, journalists, lawyers, and public intellectuals who were formed by his teaching have themselves formed further generations, creating a tradition of intellectual engagement and critical inquiry that continues to shape Bangladeshi intellectual culture. The specific values he modelled, the commitment to honesty over comfort, to breadth over narrow specialisation, to the examined life over the convenient assumptions, to the pursuit of genuine understanding over the production of credentialing work: these values have been transmitted through the intellectual tradition he established and continue to be expressed in the work of those who operate within that tradition.

The Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation's educational activities, which include supporting research students and maintaining the library, are the institutional expression of this educational legacy. The Foundation's explicit orientation toward the future, toward ensuring that the intellectual tradition Razzaq embodied continues to stimulate and enrich the minds of current and future generations, reflects the recognition that the most important thing about a great teacher is not just what he or she achieved but the tradition of inquiry and achievement that he or she initiated.

Razzaq's Ghost at the Table of Contemporary Scholarship

In a very real sense, Razzaq's ghost sits at the table of every serious contemporary discussion of Bangladeshi politics, history, economics, and culture. His influence is present whenever a Bangladeshi scholar insists on historical specificity over generic theory, whenever an economist takes the ecological conditions of the delta seriously in developing an analysis of agricultural development, whenever a constitutional lawyer insists on the substantive dimensions of democratic rights rather than merely their formal expression, whenever a teacher uses the Socratic method to push students beyond received opinions toward genuine understanding.

The recent scholarly engagement with "Political Parties in India," including the review forum in the Journal of Global South Asia Dialogue and the numerous academic and public discussions that have followed the book's 2022 publication, represents a new phase in the scholarly engagement with Razzaq's legacy. For the first time, there is a substantial written text through which his analysis can be assessed independently of the oral tradition, and the quality of that text, its historical depth, its analytical rigour, its continuing relevance to contemporary political questions, confirms that the legendary status attributed to him by his students was not merely hagiographic but was grounded in genuine intellectual achievement.

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Chapter Fifteen: Preliminary Synthesis - What Razzaq Represents

The Integrated Intellectual

What Razzaq represents, at the deepest level, is an ideal of the integrated intellectual: a person whose knowledge is not compartmentalised into disciplinary silos but organically unified by a coherent set of values and questions, whose analytical capacity is not merely technical but morally grounded, whose engagement with ideas is simultaneously rigorous and humanly sensitive, and whose intellectual activity is not separated from but deeply embedded in the social world whose understanding it seeks to advance.

This ideal of the integrated intellectual has deep roots in both the Western and the Islamic traditions. The classical ideal of the philosopher as someone who combined theoretical wisdom (sophia) with practical wisdom (phronesis), who could both understand the deepest principles of human life and navigate the specific challenges of practical decision-making, expressed precisely this integration. The Islamic ideal of the alim, the scholar who combined mastery of the religious sciences with practical wisdom and political judgment, expressed a similar integration from a different intellectual tradition.

Razzaq embodied this ideal in a specifically modern form, combining the Western social scientific training he had received at Dhaka and London with the deep knowledge of South Asian and Islamic intellectual history that he had acquired through a lifetime of reading and reflection, and bringing both to bear on the specific and urgent practical questions of his community. The result was an intellectual synthesis that was genuinely original: neither a simple application of Western frameworks to non-Western conditions nor a simple affirmation of local tradition against Western modernity, but a creative engagement between multiple intellectual traditions in the service of honest understanding.

The Courage of the Honest Intellectual

One of the most admirable and important aspects of Razzaq's intellectual character was his courage: his willingness to pursue honest analysis even when it was politically uncomfortable, even when it challenged the positions of those who held power, even when it required him to acknowledge inconvenient truths about his own community and its intellectual traditions. This courage had practical costs: the attempt by the Ayub regime to dismiss him from his position, his imprisonment in absentia during the Liberation War, the political controversies that his analysis of communalism and identity politics provoked. He paid these costs without evident resentment or retreat from his intellectual positions.

This intellectual courage is, in the current state of global politics, perhaps more relevant and valuable than ever. The pressures toward intellectual conformity, toward adjusting one's analysis to the demands of political loyalty, toward suppressing inconvenient truths in the service of community solidarity, are no less intense in the twenty-first century than they were in Razzaq's time. The model of a thinker who refused these pressures, who maintained the integrity of his analysis regardless of the political costs, who understood the pursuit of honest understanding as a

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moral imperative rather than merely a professional obligation, is a model that continues to instruct and inspire.

Conclusion of Part One

This first part of the textbook has attempted to lay the foundations for a comprehensive understanding of Professor Abdur Razzaq as an intellectual figure: his historical and cultural context, his early formation and education, his time at the London School of Economics and the philosophical orientation he developed there, his political thought and its relationship to the specific challenges of South Asia, his economic analysis and its ecological dimensions, his teaching practice and its philosophical foundations, his engagement with jurisprudence and constitutional thought, the psychological dimensions of his intellectual character, the controversies that surrounded both his life and the assessment of his legacy, and his place in the broader traditions of global intellectual history.

What emerges from this survey is a picture of an intellectual of genuine greatness: not the conventional academic greatness of prolific publication and technical mastery of a specific disciplinary domain, but the rarer and more demanding greatness of a mind that engaged the full complexity of its historical situation with extraordinary honesty, depth, and wisdom, and that transmitted through its engagement with successive generations of students not just specific intellectual conclusions but the more valuable gift of knowing how to think.

The subsequent parts of this textbook will deepen this analysis by examining in more detail the specific texts and arguments associated with Razzaq, his role in the Bangladesh independence movement, the controversies in contemporary Bangladeshi intellectual culture over the interpretation of his legacy, and the lessons that his intellectual life offers for scholars and students working in the very different but in many ways equally challenging circumstances of the twenty-first century.

Supplementary Analysis: Philosophical and Theoretical Frameworks in Contemporary Perspective

Razzaq and Post-Colonial Epistemology: Recent Developments

In the academic discourse of the last decade, there has been a significant flowering of what scholars call "decolonising knowledge," a broad intellectual movement that seeks to challenge the hegemony of Western academic frameworks in the global university system and to recover the epistemological contributions of non-Western traditions and experiences. This movement, represented in various forms by scholars like Walter Mignolo, Ramón Grosfoguel, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, and many others working in the tradition of postcolonial and decolonial theory, articulates a critique of what Mignolo calls the "colonial matrix of power" in the realm of knowledge production: the systematic privileging of Western European intellectual traditions as the standard of valid knowledge and the dismissal of non-Western ways of knowing as primitive, subjective, or merely local.

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Razzaq's intellectual practice, understood in retrospect through the lens of these theoretical developments, appears as a remarkable early instance of what decolonial epistemology calls for. He engaged seriously with the best available Western intellectual frameworks, absorbed the Enlightenment and social democratic traditions without apology, and then subjected them to a critical re-evaluation in light of the specific historical and ecological realities of his own society. This is precisely the "border thinking" that Walter Mignolo describes as the epistemological condition of those who inhabit the margins of modernity: a thinking that draws simultaneously on the dominant intellectual tradition and on the experience and knowledge of those whom that tradition has excluded or marginalised.

The concept of "pluriversality" advanced by Mignolo and others, the idea that genuine intellectual progress requires engagement with multiple epistemological traditions rather than the subordination of all knowledge to a single Western standard, is implicit in Razzaq's entire intellectual practice. His library, with its combination of European Enlightenment texts, Islamic classical scholarship, South Asian historical sources, and materials from multiple other intellectual traditions, was a material expression of this pluriversal epistemological commitment.

Recent scholarship on "southern theory," particularly the work of Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell, makes a related argument: that social science developed in and for the specific conditions of the "global north" cannot simply be exported to the "global south" without serious distortion, and that developing adequate theories for understanding southern societies requires engagement with the knowledge, experience, and intellectual traditions of those societies themselves. Connell's framework, which has been widely influential in development studies, postcolonial sociology, and related fields, provides a contemporary theoretical language for articulating what Razzaq was doing intuitively and in practice throughout his career.

Political Theory: The Revival of Republican Thought and Its Resonances with Razzaq

One of the most significant developments in political theory in recent decades has been the revival of the classical republican tradition, associated in its contemporary form with the work of Philip Pettit, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli. Republican political theory, drawing on classical Rome, the Italian city-states, the English Commonwealth tradition, and the American founding, argues that the central value of politics is not liberty in the liberal sense of non-interference but liberty in the republican sense of non-domination: freedom from the arbitrary power of others, from domination that is not subject to effective accountability.

This framework has important resonances with Razzaq's political thought. His concern with concentrated political power, his insistence on the importance of institutional constraints on executive authority, his analysis of the ways in which economic dependence creates political subjugation, and his advocacy for genuine provincial autonomy as a safeguard against central domination: all of these express a fundamentally republican concern with non-domination rather than merely a liberal concern with formal rights. The republican framework, with its emphasis on the structural conditions for genuine freedom rather than merely its formal declaration, is particularly well-suited to understanding the political situation of post-colonial societies where formal constitutional rights coexist with multiple forms of effective domination.

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Pettit's concept of "contestatory democracy," the idea that genuine democratic governance requires not just electoral representation but institutional capacity for citizens to contest and challenge the exercise of power on a continuing basis, is particularly relevant to Razzaq's concerns about the limitations of formal democratic institutions in post-colonial contexts. The critique of Pakistani constitutional politics that runs through his advisory work and his teaching is fundamentally a republican critique: the Pakistani state's formal democratic institutions were not accompanied by the kinds of institutional constraints and accountability mechanisms that would make domination impossible, and the result was the entrenchment of West Pakistani elite domination over East Bengal that eventually produced the independence movement.

Critical Legal Theory and Constitutional Jurisprudence

Razzaq's jurisprudential concerns connect to a broader tradition of critical legal analysis that has developed significantly in the decades since his active career. Critical Legal Studies (CLS), the intellectual movement that emerged in American law schools in the late 1970s and 1980s, challenged the liberal assumption that law is a neutral system of rules that can be applied without reference to political context and social structure. CLS scholars like Roberto Unger and Duncan Kennedy argued that law is inherently political, that legal doctrine encodes specific power relations, and that legal analysis that ignores these power relations mystifies rather than illuminates the operation of the legal system.

This critique connects directly to Razzaq's concern with the relationship between formal legal structures and actual distributions of power. His insistence that constitutional democracy requires not just formal legal rights but substantive economic equality, that the rule of law without adequate economic foundations is an inadequate guarantor of genuine freedom, and that legal institutions in post-colonial societies are often instruments of the perpetuation of colonial power relations rather than safeguards against them: all of these positions are recognisably related to the critical legal tradition, even though Razzaq developed them independently and in a different intellectual context.

More recently, the development of postcolonial legal theory, associated with scholars like Upendra Baxi, Antony Anghie, and others, has extended the critical legal tradition to address specifically the relationship between international law, colonial power, and post-colonial governance. Baxi's analysis of the relationship between "law in the books" and "law in practice" in post-colonial societies, his concern with the multiple forms of legal violence experienced by marginalised populations, and his insistence on the need to develop legal frameworks responsive to the specific experiences and aspirations of the world's poorest populations: these are all concerns that connect to the intellectual tradition that Razzaq represented in the South Asian context.

Development Economics: From Dependency Theory to Capabilities

Razzaq's economic thought anticipated several of the major frameworks that have emerged in development economics over the decades since his active career. His concern with the structural factors that produce economic underdevelopment, his analysis of colonial economic policies as deliberate instruments of dependency, and his insistence on the need for development strategies

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appropriate to specific ecological and social conditions rather than generic frameworks derived from Western experience: all of these connect to the tradition of dependency theory and world-systems analysis associated with scholars like Andre Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Samir Amin.

But Razzaq's approach also anticipated the more recent turn in development economics toward what Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum have developed as the "capabilities approach." Sen's famous argument, advanced in "Development as Freedom" (1999), is that development should be understood not as the expansion of GDP or economic growth in a narrow sense but as the expansion of human capabilities, the real freedoms that people have to live the kinds of lives they have reason to value. This framework connects economic development to a broader analysis of social and political conditions, insisting that genuine development requires not just economic growth but the removal of political unfreedom, social discrimination, and the lack of access to education, healthcare, and other social goods.

This capabilities framework is deeply consonant with Razzaq's concern for the full human development of his community rather than merely its material advancement. His insistence on the importance of education, his commitment to broadening the intellectual horizons of his students rather than merely equipping them with technical skills, his recognition that economic development was inseparable from political freedom and cultural identity: all of these express something very close to the capabilities approach to human development, developed independently from Sen and Nussbaum and grounded in the specific historical experience of Bengal rather than in the abstract theory of the academic philosopher.

Concluding Remarks for Part One

This first part has introduced Professor Abdur Razzaq in the fullness of his historical, philosophical, political, economic, jurisprudential, and pedagogical dimensions. We have traced his life from the village of Paragram in Nawabganj through the Government Muslim High School and Dhaka College to the University of Dhaka, from Dhaka to London and the London School of Economics, from London back to Dhaka and to the decades of teaching and intellectual engagement that made him the figure his students and admirers have described. We have situated his thought in relation to the intellectual traditions he drew on and engaged with, from Laski's democratic socialism to the Islamic jurisprudential tradition to the classical Indian political heritage. We have examined the specific dimensions of his thinking about politics, economics, history, constitutional law, and pedagogy, and we have explored the controversies that his ideas provoked and continue to provoke.

What emerges is a figure of remarkable intellectual coherence and moral integrity: a man who understood his life as a vocation of understanding, who refused the comfortable paths of conventional academic success in favour of the more demanding and more valuable work of genuine inquiry, and who transmitted through decades of teaching and personal intellectual engagement a tradition of critical, honest, and historically-grounded thinking that has shaped Bangladeshi intellectual life in ways that are still being worked out.

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The subsequent parts of this textbook will deepen and extend this analysis, examining the specific texts and lectures in detail, the role of Razzaq's thought in the independence movement and its political aftermath, the reception and interpretation of his legacy in contemporary Bangladeshi intellectual and political culture, and the specific challenges of situating his intellectual contributions in relation to the most current developments in political philosophy, development economics, constitutional theory, and postcolonial studies. The goal throughout is to do justice to a figure whose greatness, though differently evidenced than conventional academic greatness, was no less real for that difference, and whose relevance to the urgent questions of the present is if anything greater than it was in his own time.

The measured but passionate figure of Professor Abdur Razzaq, playing chess in the teachers' lounge of the University of Dhaka, moving through the stacks of his extraordinary library with the deliberate pace of a man who has nowhere else he needs to be and no better use for his time than the next book he has not yet read, receiving students who come to him with questions that he answers not with conclusions but with better questions, sitting in the evening with friends and colleagues and filling the room with the wit and warmth that were the other face of his private scholarly austerity: this figure is not merely a historical monument to be preserved but a living model of what intellectual life at its best can look like, and what it can achieve.

End of Part One. Part Two will examine in detail the texts and lectures attributed to Razzaq, beginning with a comprehensive analysis of "Political Parties in India" and proceeding through his major lecture "Bangladesh: State of the Nation" and the essays and interviews that constitute the rest of his written and recorded intellectual legacy.

Selected Bibliography and Further Reading for Part One

The following categories of source materials form the foundation for Part One's analysis and are recommended for deeper study:

Primary texts directly attributable to Razzaq include "Political Parties in India," published by the University Press Limited of Bangladesh in 2022, approximately seventy-two years after the completion of the thesis; "Bangladesh: State of the Nation," his 1980 lecture, the subject of subsequent scholarly analysis; and the scattered essays and interviews preserved in various collections.

Secondary accounts of Razzaq by his students include Ahmed Sofa's "Jaddapi Amar Guru" (Though He Is My Teacher), which remains one of the most important single sources for understanding his personal character and intellectual influence; Sardar Fazlul Karim's book based on interviews with Razzaq about Dhaka University and East Bengali society; and Salimullah Khan's extended commentary on "Bangladesh: State of the Nation."

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Institutional sources include the Banglapedia entry on Razzaq, the profile maintained by the Department of Political Science at the University of Dhaka, the Foundation Profile of the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation, and memorial accounts published in Bangladeshi newspapers including the Daily Star.

Scholarly commentaries on "Political Parties in India" include the review forum published in the Journal of Global South Asia Dialogue in 2022, the commentary published by the University of Virginia, and various academic and journalistic analyses published following the book's launch.

Works relevant to the theoretical frameworks discussed in this part include Harold Laski's major works in political theory; Edward Said's "Orientalism"; Amartya Sen's "Development as Freedom"; Philip Pettit's "Republicanism"; Walter Mignolo's works on decolonial theory; Raewyn Connell's "Southern Theory"; and the extensive secondary literature on the political history of Bengal and the partition of India.

PART TWO: THE TEXTS, THE ARGUMENTS, AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

A Detailed Investigation of "Political Parties in India," the "Bangladesh: State of the Nation" Lecture, the Essays, the Conversations, and the Full Range of Razzaq's Intellectual Legacy in Its Philosophical, Economic, Legal, Jurisprudential, and Political Dimensions

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Preface to Part Two

Part One of this textbook established the foundational context for understanding Professor Abdur Razzaq: his historical environment, his personal formation, his educational journey, the philosophical influences that shaped him, and the broad contours of his intellectual orientation. It positioned him in relation to the traditions of global political thought, identified the central paradox of a thinker who exercised extraordinary influence through oral rather than written modes of transmission, and began the systematic investigation of his ideas about politics, economics, history, jurisprudence, and education.

Part Two moves from context to content. It undertakes the close, careful, and sustained analysis that Razzaq's actual texts and recorded arguments demand. The task is simultaneously simpler and harder than Part One's broadly contextual work: simpler because there are specific texts to work with, specific arguments to follow, specific claims to evaluate against available evidence and competing theories; harder because those texts are few in number, and because the richest dimensions of his thought survive primarily in the oral tradition preserved by his students, in forms that resist the kind of direct textual analysis that academic scholarship normally employs.

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The central primary texts are three in number. The first is "Political Parties in India," the doctoral thesis completed at the London School of Economics under Harold Laski's supervision around 1950 and published by the University Press Limited of Bangladesh in 2022, seventy-two years after its completion. The second is "Bangladesh: State of the Nation," the lecture delivered in 1980, subsequently published and analysed by Salimullah Khan and others, and widely regarded as the most concentrated expression of Razzaq's mature political thinking. The third is the body of essays, interviews, and recorded conversations that have been preserved in various collections and publications, including the book-length interview conducted by Sardar Fazlul Karim and the memoir by Ahmed Sofa titled "Jaddapi Amar Guru" (Though He Is My Teacher).

Beyond these primary texts, Part Two draws extensively on the secondary literature: the scholarly commentaries, academic reviews, and intellectual assessments produced by Razzaq's students and by subsequent generations of scholars who have engaged with his thought. It also situates his arguments in relation to the most current theoretical developments in political philosophy, development economics, constitutional jurisprudence, postcolonial theory, and the comparative history of ideas, demonstrating that his thinking, developed in the specific context of mid-twentieth-century Bengal, speaks with remarkable directness to the theoretical debates and practical challenges of the twenty-first century.

A note on method is required here. This textbook treats Razzaq's ideas not merely as historical artefacts to be catalogued and preserved but as living arguments to be engaged with, tested against contemporary evidence and alternative theories, and evaluated for their continuing analytical and practical utility. This means that the analysis sometimes moves beyond strictly biographical and textual description into philosophical and theoretical territory. Where Razzaq's arguments are strong, the analysis says why they are strong and what makes them still valuable. Where they have limitations or have been superseded by subsequent scholarship, the analysis acknowledges this honestly and places the limitations in appropriate context. The goal is not hagiography but genuine intellectual engagement, which is the only kind of engagement that the subject of this study would have found worthwhile.

Chapter One: "Political Parties in India" - The Text, Its History, and Its Significance

The Recovery of a Lost Text

The publication of "Political Parties in India" in 2022 was one of the most significant events in Bangladeshi intellectual and academic culture in recent decades. For over seven decades, the thesis had existed in a kind of intellectual limbo: it was known about, referenced, and treated as a major document of Razzaq's thought by those who had read it or heard about it, but it was not publicly available, not widely read, and not subject to the kind of sustained critical scholarly analysis that a major academic text normally receives. Its publication by the University Press Limited of Bangladesh, with an introduction by Salimullah Khan, finally gave scholars and students the opportunity to engage with it directly and to assess its quality and significance for themselves.

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The event of the publication is itself instructive. The launch, which attracted scholars, former students, public intellectuals, and members of the political and cultural establishment of Bangladesh, generated the kind of intellectual excitement that major scholarly publications rarely produce. Speaker after speaker at the launch noted, as subsequent commentary recorded, that Razzaq's thoughts were still relevant because political parties had made power a life-and-death matter. The observation is striking not merely as a tribute to Razzaq's analytical acuity but as an index of the continuing and largely unresolved character of the problems he had identified in his doctoral work. A thesis written in 1950 about the fundamental structural problems of political party organisation in the Indian subcontinent remained, in 2022, a document of acute contemporary relevance. This is not always the case with academic theses, even brilliant ones, and the fact that it is the case here tells us something important about both the quality of Razzaq's analysis and the persistence of the conditions he was analysing.

The immediate context of the thesis's composition is worth recalling. Razzaq was at the London School of Economics between approximately 1945 and 1951. He completed his doctoral work under the supervision of Harold Laski, one of the most distinguished political theorists of the twentieth century. The period was, by any measure, an extraordinary one for the politics of the Indian subcontinent. India and Pakistan became independent in August 1947, and the Partition that accompanied independence produced one of the most catastrophic episodes of communal violence in human history. The Muslim League, which had led the Pakistan movement, had achieved its primary political goal and was now confronted with the entirely different and far more demanding challenge of governing a new state. The Indian National Congress, having led the independence movement, was now the governing party of the world's largest democracy. The political structures of both new states were in formation, and the question of what kinds of political institutions, what kinds of parties, what kinds of political culture, these new democracies would develop was one of the most urgent questions in the world.

Razzaq was not merely an academic observer of these events. He was a Bengali Muslim intellectual who had watched from London as his homeland was partitioned, as millions of people were displaced and hundreds of thousands killed, as the political vision he had previously supported took the form of a new state whose character was already raising serious questions. He was also a student of Harold Laski, who had strong views about the relationship between political party organisation, democratic governance, and social justice, and who brought to the analysis of Indian politics the perspective of a committed democratic socialist who had been actively engaged in British and international politics throughout his career.

The thesis that emerged from this context was, therefore, not an exercise in detached academic political science. It was an attempt to understand, through the most rigorous available analytical methods, the fundamental structural problems of political organisation in the Indian subcontinent: problems that had their roots in the specific historical experience of colonialism, in the social structure of Indian society, in the relationship between religious, caste, and class identities and political organisation, and in the particular character of the political movements that had led the independence struggle.

The Argument of the Thesis: Structure, Analysis, and Central Claims

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"Political Parties in India" is a work of what we would today call comparative political sociology: it analyses the structure, organisation, ideology, and social base of the major Indian political parties not merely as they formally presented themselves but as they actually functioned, grounding its analysis in the specific historical conditions that had produced them and the specific social forces that sustained them.

The central argument of the thesis, as reconstructed from both the text itself and the subsequent scholarly commentary, revolves around a distinction between what political parties in a functioning democracy ought to be and what the major Indian political parties actually were. In a functioning parliamentary democracy, in the tradition of British constitutional governance that was the model for both India and Pakistan, political parties are understood as vehicles for the organised expression of distinct political programmes, representing different but relatively coherent visions of how the state ought to be governed and what policies it ought to pursue. Parties compete for electoral support on the basis of these programmes, the winning party or coalition governs in accordance with its programme, and the losing parties provide organised opposition that holds the government accountable. The system requires parties that are internally democratic, that represent genuine social interests rather than merely factional or personal ones, and that are capable of developing and implementing coherent policies.

Razzaq's thesis argued, with historical depth and analytical precision, that the major Indian political parties did not correspond to this model and that the reasons why they did not were structural rather than merely accidental or contingent. The Indian National Congress, the dominant organisation of the independence movement, was not a political party in the European sense at all: it was an umbrella movement that had united diverse social groups, ideological tendencies, and regional interests under the single banner of independence from colonial rule. Its internal cohesion was produced by the shared goal of ending British rule rather than by any common vision of what the independent India it was creating ought to look like. Once independence was achieved, the binding cement of anti-colonial solidarity dissolved, and the profound internal contradictions of the Congress, between its socialist and capitalist wings, between its secular and communal tendencies, between its centralising and decentralising impulses, between the interests of its dominant upper-caste professional leadership and the aspirations of the peasant and working-class masses it nominally represented, became the central problem of Indian democratic politics.

The Muslim League, in Razzaq's analysis, presented a different but equally serious set of structural problems. The League had achieved the remarkable political feat of mobilising a diverse Muslim population across the Indian subcontinent around the single unifying demand for a separate Muslim state, but this achievement was based on a fundamentally negative solidarity: the shared fear of Hindu domination in an independent India rather than any positive, coherent vision of what kind of society Pakistan ought to be. The League's internal organisation was dominated by a relatively small elite of Muslim professional men, landlords, and businessmen who had personal and class interests in a separate Muslim state but who had little in common with the Muslim peasants and workers who formed the overwhelming majority of the Muslim population they claimed to represent. After the creation of Pakistan, the League was confronted with exactly the same problem as the Congress: the task of governing a diverse, complex, and

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profoundly unequal society with a political organisation whose internal coherence had been produced by a negative common enemy rather than by a positive common programme.

This structural analysis of the major Indian political parties connects to a deeper argument about the relationship between colonial rule, social structure, and democratic political development. Razzaq argued, drawing on both the empirical history of Indian politics and the theoretical framework provided by his engagement with Laski's democratic socialist political theory, that genuine democratic party politics requires certain social and economic preconditions that colonial rule had systematically prevented from developing. A functioning democratic party system requires an educated citizenry with access to independent information, a commercial and industrial bourgeoisie with the economic independence to resist state intimidation and to fund political competition, an organised working class with the institutional resources to advance its interests through legitimate political channels, and a political culture in which the rule of law is genuinely effective and in which political conflicts are resolved through institutional rather than violent means.

British colonial rule had, by its very nature, worked against the development of these preconditions. The deliberate limitation of indigenous commercial and industrial development through mercantilist trade policies, the educational system designed to produce clerks for colonial administration rather than independent thinkers and leaders, the suppression of genuine political organisation through sedition laws and other repressive measures, the systematic undermining of independent legal and judicial institutions through emergency powers and executive override: all of these had produced a political culture in which parties were not genuine vehicles of social representation and programme-based governance but factional organisations competing for access to the patronage resources of the state.

The implications of this analysis for the prospects of democratic governance in independent India and Pakistan were sobering. If the structural problems of Indian political party organisation were rooted in the colonial legacy rather than in contingent failures of political leadership or organisation, then the solution to those problems would require not merely better leadership or better institutional design but the systematic transformation of the social and economic conditions that the colonial period had produced. This was a long-term and profoundly difficult task, and there was no guarantee that the political organisations whose specific character was itself a product of the colonial legacy would be equal to it.

The Chapter on the Intelligentsia: A Self-Critical Analysis

One of the most analytically sophisticated and personally courageous sections of "Political Parties in India" is Razzaq's treatment of the role of the intelligentsia in Indian political life. This section is particularly interesting because it is, among other things, a self-critical analysis: Razzaq was himself a member of the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia that he was analysing, and his willingness to extend his critical framework to his own class, rather than exempting it from the analysis he applied to others, is both intellectually honest and politically significant.

Razzaq's argument about the intelligentsia is complex and requires careful unpacking. He did not simply argue, in the manner of some Marxist critics, that the intelligentsia was a bourgeois class

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whose apparent idealism was merely a rationalization of class interest. Nor did he argue, in the manner of some nationalist romanticists, that the intelligentsia was the authentic voice of the nation whose leadership role in the independence movement was both justified and exemplary. His position was more nuanced and more historically specific.

The Indian intelligentsia, in Razzaq's analysis, had been created by the colonial educational system as a class of men educated in European learning, employed in colonial administration and the liberal professions, and positioned socially between the colonial rulers and the mass of the Indian population. This positioning gave the intelligentsia both its characteristic strengths and its characteristic limitations. Its strengths included command of the political, legal, and intellectual languages of European modernity, familiarity with the constitutional and democratic traditions of the European states, and the analytical tools necessary to articulate a critique of colonial rule in terms that the colonial rulers themselves could not easily dismiss. The independence movement, led in large part by members of the intelligentsia, used these strengths effectively: Gandhi's satyagraha campaigns, Nehru's articulation of democratic socialist nationalism, Jinnah's constitutional arguments for Muslim political rights, all of these were products of minds formed in the intersection of Indian and European intellectual traditions that colonial education had created.

But the intelligentsia's strengths were inseparable from its limitations. Its formation through colonial education created a class that was, in some fundamental ways, more at home in the cultural and intellectual world of European modernity than in the world of the Indian masses it aspired to lead. The gap between the intelligentsia and the mass of the population, a gap of language, of cultural reference, of economic condition, and of political experience, was not merely a sociological curiosity but a fundamental structural problem for democratic politics. A democracy in which the political class is separated from the mass of the electorate by this kind of gap cannot function in the way that democratic theory prescribes, because the fundamental requirement of democratic governance, that the government is genuinely responsive to the preferences and interests of the governed, requires a kind of continuous communication and mutual understanding between governors and governed that the gap makes extremely difficult.

Razzaq's analysis of the intelligentsia's relationship to the British administration is particularly pointed. He argued that many members of the intelligentsia, even those who were formally committed to the independence movement, had a deeply ambivalent relationship to colonial rule: they were simultaneously its most articulate critics and its most essential collaborators, occupying the positions in administration, law, medicine, and education that made the colonial system function. This ambivalence was not merely personal or psychological; it was structural, rooted in the fact that the intelligentsia's position in Indian society was itself a product of colonial rule and could not survive the simple removal of that rule without fundamental transformation.

This is a point that subsequent scholarship has found both analytically powerful and personally uncomfortable for those who see themselves as inheritors of the intelligentsia tradition. The review forum in the Journal of Global South Asia Dialogue noted precisely this dimension of the thesis, raising the question of whether Razzaq's analysis is fully self-reflexive: whether, that is, he sufficiently acknowledges his own position within the intelligentsia class he is analysing and

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the ways in which that positioning might shape the perspective of his analysis. This is a legitimate scholarly question, and it is one that any serious engagement with the thesis needs to address.

The honest answer is that Razzaq's self-reflexivity, while present, is not fully developed in the thesis. He applies the analysis to the intelligentsia as a class but does not explicitly extend it to himself as an individual member of that class, does not openly ask how his own formation through colonial education and his own career as a university professor might shape his particular perspective on the problems he is analysing. This limitation is not unusual in scholarship of the 1950s, which predates the reflexive turn in the social sciences that became prominent in the 1980s and 1990s, and it does not invalidate the substantive analysis. But it is a limitation that a fully adequate engagement with the thesis needs to acknowledge.

The Treatment of Communalism: A Structural Rather Than Ideological Analysis

Perhaps the most distinctive and most enduring aspect of "Political Parties in India" is its treatment of communalism, the organisation of political life around religious community identities rather than class, programme, or territorial interests. Communalism was the central problem of Indian political life in the period Razzaq was analysing: it was the force that had produced the demand for Pakistan, the Partition, and the horrific communal violence that accompanied it, and it was the force that continued to threaten the democratic project of independent India and Pakistan.

The dominant liberal interpretation of communalism, in the 1950s as today, tended to treat it as an ideological or psychological phenomenon: a form of false consciousness produced by religious prejudice and fanaticism, by the deliberate manipulation of religious sentiment by cynical political entrepreneurs, or by the failure of education and civic culture to instill the rational, universal values that democratic citizenship requires. On this view, the solution to communalism is ideological and educational: better civic education, more enlightened political leadership, stronger constitutional commitments to secular governance.

Razzaq's analysis offered a more structural and historically grounded account. He did not deny that communalism involved ideological and psychological dimensions, that religious prejudice and political manipulation were real forces in Indian political life. But he argued that these ideological and psychological dimensions were themselves products of deeper structural conditions, and that any analysis that focused only on them without addressing the underlying conditions was both analytically inadequate and politically ineffective.

The deeper structural conditions that Razzaq identified as the roots of communalism were primarily economic and political. The competition for scarce economic resources, for government employment, for commercial opportunities, for educational positions, in a colonial economy that created acute scarcity while systematically limiting the channels through which indigenous social groups could advance their interests, produced intense inter-group competition. When the available resources were distributed through mechanisms that treated communal identity as a relevant criterion, whether through reserved positions in government service, communal electorates in colonial legislatures, or informal networks of patronage operating along

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religious community lines, the result was to make communal organisation not merely psychologically satisfying but economically rational. People organised along communal lines because communal organisation was an effective way to compete for resources in a system that used communal categories as distributive mechanisms.

This insight has profound implications for understanding both the Pakistan Movement and the subsequent political development of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The demand for Pakistan was not, in Razzaq's analysis, primarily the expression of a deep religious solidarity among Indian Muslims, a spiritual yearning for a state governed by Islamic principles. It was, more fundamentally, the expression of a specific class interest: the interest of the Muslim professional middle class, the intelligentsia, in securing access to the governmental and professional positions in an independent India that they feared would be dominated by the Hindu professional middle class which had a longer-established relationship to colonial educational and administrative institutions. The religious rhetoric of the Pakistan Movement was real, in the sense that many of its participants genuinely believed in it, but it was also a mobilising instrument for what was at bottom a competition for economic and social position.

This analysis, it should be noted, does not require the cynical conclusion that the Pakistan Movement's leaders were simply lying about their religious and civilisational commitments. People are fully capable of genuinely believing in a religious or civilisational vision while also being materially motivated by it, and the relationship between sincere belief and material interest is generally more complex than simple demystification allows. What Razzaq's structural analysis does require is the recognition that the specifically political forms taken by religious solidarity, the conversion of religious identity into a basis for territorial nationalism and state formation, cannot be adequately understood by focusing on the religious beliefs alone, without examining the economic and social conditions that made religious political mobilisation both possible and effective.

The Question of Democracy's Preconditions: An Argument with Contemporary Resonance

Running through "Political Parties in India" is an argument about the relationship between democracy and its social, economic, and cultural preconditions that has lost none of its theoretical force in the seven decades since the thesis was written. This argument can be stated simply, though its implications are complex: democracy, understood not merely as a formal electoral system but as a genuine system of popular self-governance in which political power is accountable to those over whom it is exercised, requires conditions that are not automatically produced by the declaration of democratic constitutions or the holding of elections.

The conditions that democracy requires, as Razzaq's analysis identifies them, are multiple and interrelated. They include a level of economic development sufficient to free a substantial portion of the population from the kind of desperate material dependence that makes them susceptible to economic coercion in their political choices. They include a level of education and access to independent information sufficient to enable citizens to evaluate the claims and performance of their political representatives with some degree of independent judgment. They include a political culture, built up over time through the practice of genuine political competition and peaceful transfer of power, in which the rules of democratic contest are

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internalized as legitimate by all major political actors rather than merely observed as long as they serve factional interest. They include independent institutional structures, courts, press, civil society organisations, that can resist the concentration of power in a single faction's hands and provide the organised opposition and accountability that democracy requires. And they include some measure of social equality: a level of economic and social stratification low enough that the formally equal political rights of all citizens correspond to something like real equality of political influence rather than being purely nominal.

The post-colonial states of South Asia had achieved formal democratic constitutions without having developed most of these preconditions, and Razzaq's thesis can be read as an analysis of the consequences of this disjunction. The parties that contested democratic elections in India and Pakistan were not genuine vehicles of popular representation and programme-based governance because the society in which they operated had not developed the conditions that genuine party democracy requires. The solution to this problem, if it was to be a genuine solution rather than a merely nominal one, required the systematic transformation of those conditions: the economic development that reduces material dependence, the educational expansion that builds civic capacity, the institutional development that creates genuine accountability, and the cultural change that internalizes democratic norms.

This argument places Razzaq in an interesting relationship with what has become, in contemporary political science, a major debate about the sequencing of democratisation. A significant tradition in contemporary political science, represented by scholars like Fareed Zakaria in "The Future of Freedom" (2003) and Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson in their extensive comparative political economy work, argues that premature democratisation, the establishment of formal democratic institutions in societies that lack the social and economic preconditions for democratic governance, tends to produce "illiberal democracy" or competitive authoritarianism rather than genuine democratic governance. The institutional forms of democracy are present, elections are held, constitutions are observed, but the substance of democratic accountability, the genuine responsiveness of governments to citizen preferences and the effective protection of political and civil rights, is absent.

Razzaq was making a version of this argument in 1950, before the comparative political science literature on democratisation had fully developed the conceptual apparatus to articulate it. His analysis was grounded in the specific historical experience of the Indian subcontinent rather than in the broad cross-national comparisons that contemporary political scientists use, and it was informed by a deeper social and economic historical analysis than the institutional-focused literature of contemporary comparative politics typically provides. But the fundamental insight, that democratic forms without democratic preconditions produce a specific kind of political dysfunction in which formal rights and actual power are radically dissociated, is one that his thesis articulated with clarity and historical depth that subsequent scholarship has confirmed rather than superseded.

The contemporary relevance of this argument for Bangladesh's political development is obvious and has been explicitly noted by scholars and commentators who have engaged with the thesis since its 2022 publication. The pattern of democratic elections producing governments that concentrate power, suppress opposition, undermine judicial independence, and use state

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resources for partisan advantage, a pattern that has been a recurring feature of Bangladeshi political life since independence, is precisely the dysfunction that Razzaq's analysis would predict in a society where democratic institutions have been established without the full development of their social and economic preconditions.

Chapter Two: The Analysis of the Indian National Congress - Nationalism, Class, and the Limits of Umbrella Politics

The Congress as a Social Coalition

The most extensively developed case study in "Political Parties in India" is the analysis of the Indian National Congress. The Congress deserves this extended treatment because it was not only the dominant political organisation of the independence movement but also the organisation whose character most directly shaped the institutional design and political culture of independent India, and whose success as a vehicle for mass political mobilisation made it the most instructive example of both the possibilities and the limitations of Indian democratic politics.

Razzaq's analysis of the Congress begins with its social composition. The Congress, he argued, was not a class party in the Marxist sense: it did not represent the interests of a single class in competition with other classes. It was, rather, a social coalition that brought together the urban professional middle class, the commercial bourgeoisie, sections of the industrial working class, the peasantry, and elements of the traditional landowning aristocracy under a single organisational banner. The cement that held this coalition together was the common experience of colonial subjugation and the common aspiration for self-rule rather than any positive common interest or common vision of how a self-governing India ought to be organised.

This social composition gave the Congress its extraordinary capacity for mass mobilisation but also its fundamental internal incoherence. Each of the constituent elements of the Congress coalition had different interests, different aspirations, and different visions of what an independent India should look like. The professional middle class wanted an independent state that would open the higher levels of government, law, medicine, education, and commerce to Indians who had been excluded or disadvantaged under colonial rule. The commercial bourgeoisie wanted freedom from the mercantilist policies that had privileged British commercial interests at the expense of Indian ones, and an independent state that would pursue policies conducive to Indian industrial and commercial development. The peasantry wanted land reform, reduction of rent, security of tenure, and freedom from the various forms of economic exploitation that the colonial land settlement systems had institutionalised. The working class wanted the right to organise, fair wages, and the social welfare provisions that the labour movements of the industrialised world were beginning to secure for their members.

These interests were not simply compatible. Land reform meant the redistribution of landed property from the landowning class to the peasantry, which directly threatened the interests of the Congress's own substantial landowning constituency. Industrial development under a policy of import substitution and state investment, which the bourgeoisie wanted, was not automatically

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compatible with the improvement of conditions for the peasantry and the agricultural working class, because industrial development required capital accumulation that could easily come at the expense of rural living standards. The professional middle class's interest in state expansion and the patronage opportunities it created was not necessarily compatible with the commercial bourgeoisie's interest in limiting state interference in economic activity.

The Congress's genius, in the independence period, was to defer the resolution of these internal contradictions through the shared focus on the anti-colonial struggle. Gandhi's political method, which Razzaq analysed with a characteristic combination of intellectual respect and critical distance, was particularly effective at this deferral: by grounding political mobilisation in spiritual and moral language rather than in the language of class interest and social conflict, Gandhi made it possible for people with fundamentally incompatible material interests to march together under the same banner without confronting their incompatibility directly.

But deferral is not resolution. Once independence was achieved and the anti-colonial cement dissolved, the internal contradictions of the Congress coalition became the central problem of Indian democratic governance. The question of which elements of the coalition would prevail in the competition for control of the independent state's resources and policy direction was not determined in advance by any principle internal to the Congress movement. It was determined by the specific political, economic, and social conditions of independent India, by the distribution of power within the Congress organisation, and by the contingent outcomes of specific political struggles.

Gandhi's Political Method: A Critical Assessment

Razzaq's treatment of Gandhi in "Political Parties in India" is one of the most intellectually interesting aspects of the thesis. Gandhi was, by 1950, a martyr, having been assassinated in January 1948, and the hagiographic treatment of his memory was already well-established in Indian political culture. Writing critically about Gandhi, even academically and in a thesis submitted to a British university, required a degree of intellectual independence that not all scholars in Razzaq's position would have managed.

Razzaq's assessment of Gandhi is neither hagiographic nor dismissive. He acknowledges, unambiguously, the extraordinary political achievement that Gandhi represented: his capacity to mobilise the mass of the Indian population, including the rural poor and the social outcasts who had been systematically excluded from the mainstream political movements of the colonial period, was a genuinely remarkable achievement that had no precedent in Indian or perhaps world political history. The satyagraha campaigns, the civil disobedience movement, the constructive programme: these were original political inventions that demonstrated Gandhi's profound understanding of the specific political and psychological conditions of colonial India and his remarkable capacity for political creativity.

But Razzaq also identified what he saw as the fundamental limitations of Gandhi's political method from the perspective of democratic party politics. Gandhi's method was explicitly anti-programmatic: it deliberately avoided the articulation of specific policy programmes in favour of moral and spiritual mobilisation around general principles of justice, non-violence, and self-rule.

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This was, in its immediate political context, a strength: it made it possible to unite people with very different specific interests under a single moral banner. But it was a method that produced political mobilisation without political education: it created mass engagement with a political movement without creating the kind of programme-based political consciousness that democratic governance requires.

A democracy governed by political parties requires citizens who can evaluate specific policy proposals, who understand the relationship between particular governmental decisions and their own interests and values, and who can hold their representatives accountable for specific policy failures. The kind of political consciousness that Gandhi's method produced was, in Razzaq's analysis, fundamentally different from this: it was a consciousness organised around personal loyalty to a charismatic leader, around moral and spiritual categories rather than specific policy ones, and around the shared experience of collective action rather than the individual evaluation of programmatic alternatives.

The implications for post-independence Indian democracy were serious. A political culture shaped by Gandhian methods produced voters who were accustomed to expressing their political attachment in terms of personal loyalty rather than policy preference, and parties that were organised around the personal authority of charismatic leaders rather than around coherent programmes. The result, Razzaq argued, was a tendency toward the personalisation of political authority, toward the concentration of power in the hands of whoever could command the greatest personal loyalty rather than whoever could claim the greatest programmatic competence, and toward the substitution of symbolic politics for substantive governance.

The resonances with the subsequent political history of both India and Bangladesh are extensive and have been explicitly noted by scholars who have engaged with the thesis since its publication. The dynasticism of Indian National Congress politics under the Nehru-Gandhi family, the extraordinary personal authority exercised by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Bangladesh's early independence years, the continuing importance of personal loyalty to particular leaders over policy commitment in both countries' political cultures: all of these can be understood as expressions of the specific kind of political consciousness that the Gandhian method of mass mobilisation produced and that Razzaq had identified as structurally problematic in 1950.

Nehru and the Dilemma of Democratic Socialism in Post-Colonial Conditions

Jawaharlal Nehru, who was not only Razzaq's teacher Harold Laski's most famous student but also the first Prime Minister of independent India, receives a more sympathetic treatment in "Political Parties in India" than Gandhi. Razzaq clearly had more intellectual sympathy with Nehru's project: the attempt to combine democratic political institutions with a state-directed economy that could rapidly industrialise India while maintaining the constitutional rights and political freedoms of a liberal democracy.

But Razzaq's intellectual sympathy did not prevent him from identifying the fundamental tensions in Nehru's political project. Nehru was attempting to do, in the specific conditions of a post-colonial, largely agrarian, deeply unequal, and extraordinarily diverse society, what the

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most advanced social democracies of Western Europe had achieved only after decades of industrial development, organised labour movement, and democratic political competition. The social democratic model that Nehru was attempting to implement had been developed in the specific context of mature industrial capitalism, where the primary political question was not how to develop an economy from a state of underdevelopment but how to distribute the social surplus produced by an already productive industrial economy. Applying this model in India's conditions required fundamental modifications that Nehru's framework, shaped by his London School of Economics formation, did not fully work out.

The specific problem that Razzaq identified was the relationship between state capacity and democratic governance. The rapid industrialisation and economic development that India's poverty required demanded a strong, directive state with substantial capacity to mobilise resources, direct investment, and implement economic planning. But a strong directive state is also, by its nature, a state with substantial capacity to suppress political opposition, concentrate power, and undermine the accountability mechanisms that democratic governance requires. The tension between the requirements of development and the requirements of democracy was a real structural tension that could not be resolved simply by declaring commitment to both.

Nehru's own personal commitment to democratic values was genuine and was expressed in real institutional choices: the independence of the Indian judiciary, the freedom of the Indian press, the tolerance of political opposition that distinguished India from most other newly independent states. But the institutional arrangements he created, particularly the dominant position of a single party, the Congress, in both government and civil society, and the extensive executive powers that the Indian constitution concentrated in the central government, created structural conditions that were more congenial to the concentration of power than to its distribution.

Chapter Three: The Muslim League and the Structure of Pakistan - Prophecy in an Academic Text

The Analysis of the Muslim League: Ideology and Organisation

Razzaq's analysis of the Muslim League in "Political Parties in India" is, from the retrospective vantage point of Bangladesh's independence in 1971, the most prophetically significant section of the thesis. Writing in 1950, in the first years of Pakistan's existence, Razzaq identified with clinical precision the structural problems of the Muslim League that would, within two decades, produce the political crisis that Bangladesh's independence resolved.

The Muslim League, in Razzaq's analysis, was an organisation that had achieved its primary political goal, the creation of Pakistan, without having developed the characteristics of a genuine political party capable of democratic governance. Its internal organisation was dominated by a relatively small elite of Muslim landowners, lawyers, and merchants from specific regions and communities, primarily from what is now Pakistan rather than from East Bengal, which had provided the overwhelming majority of the Muslim League's popular vote. This geographical and social imbalance in the League's leadership was not merely an accidental feature of its

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historical development; it expressed a structural reality about which segments of the Muslim Indian population had the most to gain from the creation of Pakistan and therefore the most powerful motivations to lead the movement for it.

The Muslim majority population of East Bengal had been the numerical backbone of the Pakistan movement, providing the decisive majorities in the Bengal provincial assembly that had made Partition possible and the mass popular support that had given the movement its democratic legitimacy. But the leadership of the movement, and therefore the political class that inherited the new state, was disproportionately drawn from the Muslim minority populations of what became West Pakistan and from the Urdu-speaking Muslim professional class of northern India that migrated to Pakistan at independence. The interests and cultural orientations of these leadership groups were significantly different from those of the Bengali Muslim majority population, and the institutional structure of the new state reflected these differences.

Razzaq identified this structural imbalance as a fundamental problem for Pakistan's democratic viability. A democratic state whose governing class is systematically unrepresentative of its majority population, whose political institutions are designed to serve the interests of a specific regional and social elite rather than to represent the full diversity of the state's citizens, cannot function as a genuine democracy regardless of its formal constitutional commitments. The Pakistani constitution's formal commitment to democratic governance was real, but the structural conditions of Pakistani political life, the imbalance of power between the West Pakistani elite and the East Bengali majority, the economic policies that systematically disadvantaged East Bengal's development, the cultural politics that treated the Urdu language as the national language of a state in which most people spoke Bengali, were incompatible with genuine democratic representation.

Reading this analysis in 2024 or 2025, with full knowledge of the subsequent history, it is impossible not to be struck by how accurately Razzaq had diagnosed, in 1950, the specific structural problems that would produce the political crisis of 1971. The thesis did not predict the Liberation War: Razzaq was a scholar, not a prophet, and prediction was not his purpose. But the analysis of the structural conditions that he provided is precisely the analysis that makes the events of 1971 historically intelligible rather than contingent or accidental.

The Two-Nation Theory: A Structural Critique

One of the most intellectually significant aspects of Razzaq's analysis of the Muslim League is his treatment of the two-nation theory, the ideological foundation of the Pakistan movement. The two-nation theory, in its most common formulation, held that Muslims and Hindus in the Indian subcontinent were not merely two religious communities within a single nation but two distinct nations, with different histories, different cultures, different civilisational foundations, and therefore different and incompatible political destinies. This theory provided the ideological justification for a separate Muslim state and for the Partition that accompanied independence.

Razzaq's critique of the two-nation theory was not primarily ideological but structural and historical. He did not engage primarily with the philosophical question of whether Muslims and Hindus constituted two nations in some deep cultural or civilisational sense. He engaged with the

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political and social question of whether the two-nation theory, as the basis for state formation, could produce the democratic, economically functional state that its proponents promised.

His structural argument was that the two-nation theory contained a fundamental internal contradiction that made it an inadequate basis for state formation in the specific conditions of the Indian subcontinent. The theory assumed that religious identity was the primary and overriding basis for political solidarity, that the shared Islamic faith of Muslim Indians from Bengal to the Punjab to Sindh to the North-West Frontier constituted a sufficient basis for the political unity of a new state. But the Muslim population of the Indian subcontinent was not in fact homogeneous in the ways that the two-nation theory required: it was divided by language, region, culture, economic interest, caste, and social class in ways that religious solidarity alone could not bridge.

The internal diversity of the Muslim population was, in Razzaq's analysis, precisely the kind of diversity that a functioning democratic party system needs to represent and negotiate. A democratic state serves its population well when its political institutions provide effective channels for the different interests, perspectives, and aspirations of its diverse population to be represented, negotiated, and accommodated in public policy. The two-nation theory, by asserting that the religious identity of all Muslims constituted a sufficient basis for political unity, effectively denied the reality of this diversity and therefore denied the need for the kind of political institutions and political culture that genuine democratic representation requires.

The practical consequence was exactly what Razzaq's structural analysis predicted: the Pakistani state, organised on the premise of Muslim unity, was unable to accommodate the real diversity of its Muslim population, particularly the fundamental difference between the Bengali Muslim majority and the West Pakistani elite. The assertion of Bengali language rights, the demand for economic equity, the insistence on provincial autonomy, were all treated by the Pakistani state as threats to national unity rather than as legitimate expressions of democratic diversity, because the theoretical framework of the state left no room for acknowledging that legitimate political diversity could exist within the Muslim nation.

Chapter Four: "Bangladesh: State of the Nation" - The Mature Political Vision

The 1980 Lecture and Its Historical Context

If "Political Parties in India" represents the systematic academic elaboration of Razzaq's political analysis in the tradition of Western social science scholarship, the 1980 lecture "Bangladesh: State of the Nation" represents its concentrated political expression, addressed directly to the situation of the newly independent Bangladesh with the full weight of thirty additional years of historical experience and reflection behind it.

The lecture was delivered in 1980, nine years after Bangladesh's independence and three years after the military coup of 1975 that had ended the parliamentary democracy of the independence period and installed General Ziaur Rahman as head of state. It was a period of significant political uncertainty and transition: the constitutional framework of 1972 had been

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fundamentally altered, the Awami League government had been violently overthrown, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been assassinated, and Bangladesh was navigating the complex and contested process of redefining its political identity in the wake of these traumatic events.

The lecture was also delivered against the background of Bangladesh's severe economic difficulties. The famine of 1974, which had killed hundreds of thousands of people in a country that had barely completed its liberation struggle, was a devastating reminder of the fragility of Bangladesh's economic and social foundations. The political instability of the mid-1970s had disrupted whatever momentum the new state had developed toward economic development, and the question of how Bangladesh was to develop an economy capable of sustaining its large and growing population in the specific ecological conditions of the delta was one of the most urgent practical questions facing the country.

Razzaq brought to this situation not the detached analysis of an academic political scientist but the engaged concern of a man who had spent his entire adult life thinking about the problems of governance and development in the Bengal delta, who had watched the independence movement from a position of close intellectual and personal involvement with its leadership, and who had seen both the extraordinary achievement of independence and the profound difficulties that had followed it. The lecture combines historical analysis with political diagnosis and normative prescription in a way that "Political Parties in India" had not: it is not merely an analytical exercise but an act of political engagement by a man who believed that honest intellectual analysis was itself a form of political responsibility.

The Central Argument: Democracy's Structural Preconditions in Bangladesh's Specific Context

The central argument of "Bangladesh: State of the Nation" develops and applies to the specific situation of independent Bangladesh the structural analysis of democracy and its preconditions that Razzaq had elaborated in his doctoral thesis three decades earlier. The lecture argues, with a directness and specificity that academic constraints had prevented in the thesis, that Bangladesh's difficulties with democratic governance were not primarily the result of particular individuals' moral failures or particular governments' policy mistakes but of structural conditions that would have made democratic governance difficult regardless of the specific people involved.

The structural conditions that Razzaq identified in 1980 as the fundamental challenges to Bangladeshi democracy were multiple and interrelated. They included the extreme poverty and economic dependency of the majority of the population, which made them susceptible to the kinds of clientelistic political manipulation that prevents genuinely autonomous political choice. They included the extraordinary concentration of economic power in the hands of a small elite, whose control of land, credit, and commercial networks gave them political influence vastly disproportionate to their numbers. They included the weakness of the independent institutional structures, an independent judiciary, a free press, autonomous civil society organisations, that effective democratic accountability requires. They included the political culture inherited from the colonial and Pakistani periods, which had normalised the use of state power for factional purposes rather than for the general welfare. And they included the specific ecological and economic vulnerabilities of the Bangladesh delta, which created conditions of periodic crisis that

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political actors could exploit and that made the population dependent on governmental relief in ways that could easily become instruments of political control.

This diagnosis was not intended as pessimistic or as an argument that democracy in Bangladesh was impossible. It was intended as a guide to the specific tasks that building genuine democracy in Bangladesh required. If the structural preconditions for democratic governance were absent or weak, the task was to build them: to develop the economic conditions that freed citizens from material dependence, to strengthen the independent institutions that provide accountability, to develop the political culture that internalises democratic norms, and to create the ecological and economic resilience that reduces vulnerability to crisis-based political manipulation.

The prescriptive dimension of the lecture is less elaborated than the diagnostic one, and this is not an accident. Razzaq was deeply sceptical of grandiose development blueprints and comprehensive political programmes. His historical sense told him that the trajectory of social and political change was too complex and too contingent to be reduced to a simple prescription, and his experience of the ways in which well-intentioned political programmes could produce unintended and destructive consequences made him cautious about confident prescriptivism. His prescriptions were therefore broad principles rather than specific programmes: the need for genuinely autonomous institutions, the importance of genuine economic equity, the priority of ecological sustainability in development planning, the necessity of a political culture that internalises democratic accountability rather than merely performing it.

The Analysis of Military Intervention in Politics

One of the most striking and, in the context of 1980, most politically courageous aspects of the "Bangladesh: State of the Nation" lecture is its analysis of military intervention in politics. The lecture was delivered under a military government, which made direct criticism of military rule politically dangerous, and yet Razzaq's analysis cannot be read as anything other than a fundamental critique of the political conditions that make military intervention both possible and attractive.

Razzaq's approach to the question of military politics was characteristically structural rather than moralistic. He did not condemn military intervention in politics simply as a betrayal of democratic principles or as the ambition of particular military officers. He asked, in his characteristic way, what conditions produce the structural possibility of military intervention in politics, and what those conditions tell us about the broader state of democratic governance.

The structural conditions that make military intervention possible and, from the perspective of the intervening officers, seem to justify it, are conditions of democratic failure: the breakdown of normal political institutions, the incapacity of civilian governments to maintain public order or manage economic crisis, the corruption of political parties into instruments of factional plunder rather than public service, and the perception by powerful institutional actors, including the military, that the civilian political class is not merely incompetent but actively harmful to the national interest. When civilian political institutions fail in these ways, military intervention appears not as a usurpation of legitimate authority but as a necessary rescue of the state from its incapacity.

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Razzaq's analysis insisted, however, that military rescue of this kind does not solve the underlying problem and typically makes it worse. The conditions that produce democratic failure are structural, and they cannot be resolved by the substitution of military discipline for civilian incompetence. Military government can maintain order in the short term, but it cannot build the institutions, develop the political culture, or create the economic conditions that democratic governance requires. Worse, military government typically prevents the development of those conditions by suppressing the political competition, civil society organisations, and independent institutional development through which democratic norms are built and embedded. A society that repeatedly relies on military intervention to save it from the failures of civilian government becomes increasingly incapable of building the civilian institutions it needs, because each military intervention disrupts the processes through which those institutions might have developed.

This analysis, delivered in 1980 under a military government, was not merely academically brave; it was a direct challenge to the political legitimacy of the regime under which Razzaq was delivering his lecture. The lecture's reception, and the fact that it was delivered at all without apparent consequences for its author, is itself a testimony both to Razzaq's personal courage and intellectual authority and to the specific character of the Zia regime's relationship to the intellectual class.

Ecological Thought as Political Economy: The Delta as Both Resource and Challenge

One of the most original aspects of the "Bangladesh: State of the Nation" lecture, and one that has received relatively less attention in the subsequent scholarly commentary than the explicitly political dimensions of the analysis, is its treatment of Bangladesh's ecological conditions as fundamental parameters of its political economy. This ecological dimension of Razzaq's thinking represents a genuinely distinctive contribution that anticipates the ecological economics and environmental political economy literature that would develop significantly in the decades after the lecture was delivered.

Razzaq's argument was that any serious analysis of Bangladesh's economic and political possibilities had to begin with the specific ecological conditions of the Bengal delta, which were not merely the background setting of economic and political life but active determinants of what was economically possible, what was ecologically sustainable, and what kinds of political and social organisation were most appropriate to the specific conditions of a delta civilization.

The Bengal delta, in Razzaq's analysis, is not merely a geographical region characterised by certain physical features. It is a specific type of human ecological system in which the relationship between human populations and the river systems that sustain them is the fundamental organising principle of social and economic life. The extraordinary fertility of the deltaic soil, continuously renewed by alluvial deposition from the Himalayan rivers, had historically supported one of the world's densest and most productive agricultural systems. The river networks that crisscrossed the delta were not merely transport routes but the fundamental infrastructure of the entire economic system: they carried agricultural produce to markets, connected villages to towns, provided the fish protein that supplemented the cereal-based agricultural diet, and regulated the water supply on which the irrigation systems depended.

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But the same delta ecology that made Bengal one of the world's most productive agricultural regions also made it one of its most ecologically vulnerable. The same rivers that deposited the fertile alluvial soil regularly flooded, destroying crops, displacing populations, and creating the conditions of periodic famine that had been a recurrent feature of Bengal's history. The same densely populated delta that supported a large agricultural population was also one of the world's most exposed regions to the cyclonic storms that periodically devastated coastal areas. The same agricultural system that had historically supported prosperity was also, in the conditions of colonial underdevelopment and subsequent post-colonial dependence, a system of extraordinary fragility that could be tipped into crisis by policy failures, market disruptions, or climatic events.

Razzaq's ecological argument was that development strategies for Bangladesh had to be designed with this specific ecological reality in mind. Development models imported from ecologically different contexts, whether the industrialisation models of East Asian success stories or the Green Revolution models promoted by international agricultural development institutions, could not simply be applied to Bangladesh's conditions without fundamental modification. The specific constraints and opportunities of a delta ecology required development thinking that was specifically appropriate to those conditions, that took seriously both the productive possibilities of the delta's extraordinary natural fertility and the vulnerability that its ecological position created.

This argument anticipates, with remarkable prescience, the contemporary literature on climate-adaptive development, on ecological economics, and on the specific development challenges facing deltaic regions in a world of intensifying climate change. Bangladesh is today one of the countries most severely threatened by climate change: rising sea levels, intensified cyclonic activity, increased flooding intensity, and the disruption of the monsoon systems on which the entire agricultural system depends are all converging threats that make the question of ecologically appropriate development not merely an academic but an existential one. Razzaq's insistence, in 1980, on the necessity of ecologically grounded development thinking was not merely prescient; it was, in retrospect, one of the most important contributions in his entire body of thought.

Chapter Five: The Jurisprudential Dimension - Law, Constitution, and the Conditions of Political Freedom

Legal Theory and Political Philosophy: The Inseparability of Law and Power

Razzaq was not a lawyer in the formal sense, and his contributions to legal theory were not expressed in the systematic form of academic jurisprudence. But running through his political analysis, from the doctoral thesis through the 1980 lecture and the recorded conversations with students, is a coherent and sophisticated approach to questions of law, constitutionalism, and the relationship between legal structures and the distribution of political power that deserves to be recognised as a genuine contribution to legal and constitutional theory.

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The foundation of Razzaq's legal thought is a thoroughgoing realism about the relationship between law and power. This realism distinguishes him from the liberal legal tradition in which formal legal rights and constitutional commitments are treated as autonomous guarantors of freedom, independent of the social and economic conditions in which they operate. For Razzaq, as for the legal realists of the American tradition and the critical legal theorists who developed from that tradition, the meaning of legal norms is not determined by their text or their formal legal status but by the social, economic, and political conditions in which they are applied. A constitutional right to free speech means something very different in a society with a genuinely independent press, an educated citizenry, and effective legal remedies for violations than it means in a society where media ownership is concentrated, public education is inadequate, and the courts are subject to executive pressure.

This insight, which sounds obvious when stated in these terms, has profound implications for constitutional design and political evaluation. It means that the quality of a constitutional order cannot be assessed simply by reading its text, by identifying the rights it declares and the institutions it establishes. It requires an analysis of the social and economic conditions that determine whether the rights and institutions declared in the constitutional text correspond to anything real in the lived experience of the citizens the constitution governs.

Razzaq applied this realist approach to the constitutions of Pakistan and Bangladesh with equal rigour. The Pakistani constitutions of 1956 and 1962, and later 1973, all declared commitments to democratic governance, the rule of law, and the protection of fundamental rights. Razzaq's analysis insisted that these declarations were insufficient and that their insufficiency was not merely a matter of imperfect implementation but of structural conditions that made genuine implementation extremely difficult. The social and economic conditions of Pakistani and Bangladeshi society, the concentration of economic power, the weakness of independent institutions, the legacy of colonial administrative culture, were conditions under which formal constitutional commitments to democratic governance and fundamental rights could not effectively constrain the actual exercise of political power.

The Provincial Autonomy Argument: Constitutionalism as Anti-Domination

One of the most consistently held and most practically significant positions in Razzaq's constitutional thinking was his insistence on the necessity of genuine provincial autonomy as a safeguard against domination. This position, which he maintained from his early academic years through to his mature political commentary, was grounded in both a theoretical argument about the structural requirements of non-domination and a specific historical analysis of the relationship between centralism and East Bengali subordination.

The theoretical argument draws on the republican tradition's concern with the conditions of non-domination, which Part One of this textbook identified as a fundamental dimension of Razzaq's political thought. Domination, in the republican sense, is the condition of being subject to the arbitrary power of another, of being in a position where another actor has the capacity to interfere in your choices and activities without effective constraint. Domination does not require actual interference: it is present wherever the capacity for arbitrary interference exists, whether or not it is exercised in any particular instance. A state that has the capacity to override the

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decisions of its provinces, to impose central policy decisions on provincial populations without effective accountability, is a structure of domination regardless of whether it exercises that capacity benevolently or not.

The historical argument is specific to the conditions of Pakistan. East Bengal, in Pakistan, was in exactly the condition of domination that this analysis describes: it was a population subject to the capacity of a central government, whose composition and orientation were dominated by West Pakistani interests, to override its preferences, impose policies it had not chosen, and suppress the political expressions of its distinct interests and identity. The specific forms this domination took, the imposition of Urdu as the national language, the concentration of central government offices and military positions in West Pakistan, the economic policies that extracted value from East Bengal's agricultural production without returning it in investment, were all exercises of the capacity for arbitrary interference that the constitutional structure of Pakistan had placed in central government hands.

Razzaq's argument for provincial autonomy was therefore not merely a political preference or an expression of Bengali nationalism. It was a constitutional argument: the claim that a genuinely non-dominating constitutional order in the conditions of Pakistan required structural guarantees of provincial autonomy that would effectively constrain the central government's capacity for arbitrary interference in provincial affairs. These guarantees needed to be more than formal: they needed to be backed by genuine institutional mechanisms, by fiscal autonomy that gave provinces the economic resources to govern independently, by judicial review that would effectively enforce constitutional limits on central power, and by political arrangements that gave provincial populations genuine democratic control over the decisions that most directly affected their lives.

The subsequent history of Bangladesh's constitutional development illustrates both the importance and the difficulty of building these structural guarantees into constitutional design. Bangladesh's 1972 constitution established a parliamentary democracy with a strong executive, reflecting the experience of the liberation struggle and the specific political context of independence. The subsequent amendments to the constitution, including the introduction of the presidential system under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975 and the various constitutional manipulations of the military and quasi-military governments that followed, represent precisely the pattern of constitutional erosion that Razzaq's analysis would predict in conditions where the structural foundations of constitutional governance remain weak.

Rule of Law and Its Substantive Conditions

A closely related dimension of Razzaq's constitutional thought is his analysis of the rule of law and its conditions. The rule of law is one of the central concepts of liberal constitutional theory, but it is also one of the most contested: there are multiple, substantially different understandings of what it means for law rather than personal authority to rule, and the specific content given to the concept has important implications for what it requires in practice.

The thin version of the rule of law, associated with A.V. Dicey's classic formulation and with the legal positivist tradition more broadly, requires simply that governmental power be exercised

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through general rules publicly declared and consistently applied, rather than through arbitrary personal commands. On this thin version, the rule of law is compatible with very considerable inequality and injustice: a system of slavery can satisfy the formal requirements of the rule of law if the laws governing the institution of slavery are publicly declared, consistently applied, and applied equally to all slaveholders. The thinness of this version of the rule of law is precisely its problem: it tells us very little about the substantive justice of the legal order and nothing about whether the formal legal equality it guarantees corresponds to any real equality in the social world.

Razzaq's implicit legal theory required a substantially thicker version of the rule of law, one that connected formal legal equality to substantive social and economic conditions. His insistence that genuine democratic governance required not just formal constitutional rights but substantive economic equality was an implicit argument that the rule of law, properly understood, requires something more than the formal consistency of legal application: it requires the social conditions under which formally equal legal rights can be exercised with something like real equality by all citizens, not just by those with the economic resources and social connections to access the legal system effectively.

This thicker version of the rule of law has much in common with what the contemporary jurisprudential tradition calls the "substantive rule of law" or, in a different formulation, the "social rule of law": the idea that formal legal equality is insufficient for the realisation of the values that the rule of law ideal is meant to express, and that those values require attention to the social and economic conditions in which legal rules operate. The development of this richer conception of the rule of law in contemporary jurisprudence, associated with scholars like T.R.S. Allan, Martin Krygier, and others working in the tradition of liberal legal theory, confirms and extends the insights that Razzaq had articulated in his own way.

Chapter Six: Economic Philosophy - Commerce, Development, and the Delta Civilization

The Historical Economics of Bengal: Recovery and Reinterpretation

Razzaq's economic thinking cannot be adequately understood without situating it in its specifically historical dimension. Unlike many economists, who operate primarily within theoretical frameworks developed from abstract models and cross-national statistical analysis, Razzaq thought about economic questions through the lens of concrete historical experience: the history of specific economies in specific places, the ways in which specific economic organisations had developed and been disrupted, and the lessons that this historical specificity offers for economic policy.

His reconstruction of Bengal's pre-colonial economic history, discussed in Part One and documented in the memoir of former finance minister Md. Syeduzzaman, is the foundation of this historical economic analysis. The central claim, that Bengal's historical prosperity was based on its commercial and manufacturing excellence rather than merely on its agricultural fertility, is not only historically significant but has important theoretical implications. It challenges the

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implicit assumption of much development economics that agricultural societies are naturally pre-modern and that modernisation requires industrialisation, urbanisation, and the supersession of agriculture by more productive and more technically sophisticated forms of economic organisation.

Razzaq's historical analysis suggested a different view: that agricultural and manufacturing excellence were not sequential stages of economic development but potentially complementary dimensions of a sophisticated economic system. The Bengal that had produced the finest textiles in the world was a society in which agricultural productivity supported a large non-agricultural population engaged in sophisticated manufacturing, and in which commercial networks connected local production to global markets with considerable efficiency. This was not a pre-modern economy waiting to be modernised but a sophisticated economic system that was itself a form of modernity, operating according to its own principles and serving its own population's needs in its own way.

The destruction of this economic system by British colonial policies was, on this reading, not the replacement of a backward economy with a more progressive one but the dismantling of a functional and sophisticated economic organisation in the service of imperial commercial interests. The impoverishment of Bengal that resulted was not the natural condition of an underdeveloped economy awaiting modernisation but the specific historical product of specific policy choices made for specific imperial purposes.

This historical analysis had direct implications for economic policy in independent Bangladesh. If Bengal's poverty was historically produced rather than naturally given, then development policy needed to be oriented toward the recovery and reconstruction of the economic capabilities that colonial policy had destroyed, not merely toward the application of generic development models developed for different historical and ecological conditions. The restoration of manufacturing excellence, the rebuilding of commercial networks, the development of economic institutions capable of supporting sophisticated commercial and productive activity: these were historical tasks with specific historical contexts, not merely the application of generic development economics.

Against Development Orthodoxy: A Critical Engagement

Razzaq's engagement with the development economics of his time was characterised by the same combination of serious intellectual engagement and critical independence that marked his engagement with all intellectual traditions. He was familiar with the mainstream development economics of the post-war period, with the modernisation theory of W.W. Rostow, the structural transformation models of Arthur Lewis, and the planning theories associated with the first generation of post-colonial development economists. He was also familiar, through his engagement with Laski and the democratic socialist tradition, with the critiques of development orthodoxy coming from the left, from the dependency theorists and world-systems analysts who argued that the underdevelopment of the global south was not a failure to follow the development path of the north but the structural product of a global economic system that systematically extracted value from poor countries for the benefit of rich ones.

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Razzaq's own position was neither straightforwardly orthodox nor straightforwardly heterodox. He shared the structural critique's insight that underdevelopment was historically produced and systemically maintained rather than being the natural condition of poor societies. But he was sceptical of the more doctrinaire versions of dependency theory, which attributed all economic problems of poor countries to external exploitation and denied the significance of internal social, political, and institutional factors. His analysis of the Muslim League and the intelligentsia in "Political Parties in India" already demonstrated his conviction that the internal social and political organisation of post-colonial societies was a significant independent determinant of their developmental trajectory, not merely an epiphenomenon of their position in the world economic system.

His most distinctive contribution to economic thinking was the insistence on ecological and historical specificity. Against the tendency of development economics to develop universal models applicable to all poor countries regardless of their specific conditions, Razzaq insisted that the specific ecological and historical conditions of particular societies were fundamental determinants of what economic development could look like for them and what policies were most likely to be effective. The Bengal delta, with its specific combination of extraordinary agricultural fertility, ecological vulnerability, dense population, and specific history of manufacturing and commercial organisation, required development thinking that was appropriate to precisely these conditions, not a generic model imported from contexts with fundamentally different conditions.

This insistence on specificity was not anti-theoretical or merely descriptive. Razzaq understood that good economic analysis required theoretical frameworks as well as historical knowledge, and he drew on the theoretical resources available to him with discernment and sophistication. But he insisted that theoretical frameworks needed to be tested against and modified by the specific conditions of the societies they were intended to illuminate, rather than being applied to those conditions on the assumption that they were universally valid regardless of context.

The Question of Agricultural Development: Land, Water, and the Peasant

Central to Razzaq's economic thinking about Bangladesh was the question of agricultural development, specifically the relationship between land tenure systems, water management, and the welfare of the peasant majority. This was not merely an academic question: the majority of Bangladesh's population, in the decades he was writing and thinking, derived their livelihoods from agriculture, and the specific terms on which they did so, the land tenure arrangements that determined who owned the land they worked, the credit systems that determined on what terms they could finance their agricultural activity, the water management systems that determined whether their crops would be irrigated or flooded, were determinants of the material conditions of the majority of the population.

The land tenure systems of Bangladesh were a specific historical creation of the colonial period, specifically of the Permanent Settlement of 1793, which had created a class of zamindars, hereditary landowners, with perpetual rights over the land and its cultivators. The Permanent Settlement had been designed to provide the colonial government with a predictable revenue stream, and it had achieved this purpose at the cost of creating a class of intermediaries who

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extracted rent from the cultivators without contributing to agricultural productivity and who had no incentive to invest in agricultural improvement. The result was a system of tenure that combined insecure cultivation rights for the actual agricultural workers with a structurally parasitic landlord class whose economic interests were fundamentally opposed to both agricultural development and the welfare of the peasant majority.

Razzaq's analysis of this system drew on his historical understanding of Bengal's agrarian history and on his reading of the extensive literature on land reform and agrarian development that the post-war period had produced. His conclusion was that genuine agricultural development in Bangladesh required fundamental land reform: the redistribution of land from the zamindari class to the actual cultivators, the establishment of secure cultivation rights, and the development of cooperative institutions that would allow small cultivators to achieve the economies of scale in production, processing, and marketing that their small individual holdings could not provide.

This position put him in broad agreement with the mainstream development economics of the early independence period, which tended to see land reform as a necessary precondition for agricultural development in largely agrarian societies. But Razzaq's argument had a distinctive ecological dimension that the mainstream literature typically lacked. Land reform alone, he argued, was insufficient in the specific conditions of the Bengal delta, because the key determinant of agricultural productivity in the delta was not merely land ownership but water management. The delta's extraordinary agricultural fertility was dependent on the management of the river systems that both irrigated the fields and threatened them with flooding, and this water management was a collective problem that no amount of individual land redistribution could solve.

The water management argument is one of the most prescient aspects of Razzaq's economic thinking. The development of the Green Revolution in South Asia in the 1960s and 1970s depended heavily on irrigation, specifically on the exploitation of groundwater through tube wells, which transformed agricultural productivity in regions where rainfall was insufficient for high-yield variety cultivation. In Bangladesh, however, the relationship between water management and agricultural development is more complex than simple irrigation, because the delta's water problem is not just the absence of water but its excess: the management of flooding and drainage is as important as the management of irrigation, and the relationship between the different river channels, the movement of alluvial soil, and the agricultural calendar creates a system of hydraulic interdependence that requires collective management at scales significantly larger than the individual farm or even the individual village.

The failure to address this collective water management problem has been, in retrospect, one of the most significant weaknesses of agricultural development policy in Bangladesh, and it has contributed to the persistent vulnerability of agricultural production to flooding and to the uneven distribution of the Green Revolution's benefits across different ecological zones of the delta. Razzaq's early insistence on the ecological dimension of agricultural development was, once again, a form of prescience that subsequent events have confirmed.

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Chapter Seven: The Philosophical Dimension - Epistemology, Methodology, and the Architecture of Understanding

The Question of Knowledge: What Can Be Known and How

Underlying Razzaq's specific analyses of politics, economics, history, and law is a set of epistemological commitments, positions about what can be known, how it can be known, and what constitutes genuine understanding, that deserve explicit attention. These epistemological commitments are rarely stated explicitly in the surviving texts and recorded conversations, but they are consistently implicit in his analytical practice and in the specific intellectual moves he makes repeatedly across different domains.

The most fundamental of these commitments is a form of historical epistemology: the conviction that human social phenomena, including political organisations, economic systems, legal structures, and cultural practices, can only be adequately understood in their historical dimension, in relation to the specific processes of development, transformation, and interaction through which they have come to be what they are. This is not a trivial or obvious position. Much of mainstream social science, particularly in the positivist traditions that dominated Western academic practice through most of the twentieth century, aspired to the development of universal laws or covering-law explanations that would be valid across different historical periods and different social contexts. The ambition was to identify the general principles that govern social phenomena and to apply those principles to specific cases in the way that physical laws are applied to specific physical events.

Razzaq's historical epistemology was a rejection of this aspiration, not from a position of anti-scientific irrationalism but from a conviction, grounded in deep historical learning, that social phenomena are irreducibly historical in a way that physical phenomena are not. The political parties of India in 1950 are not instances of the general category "political party" in the way that a particular sample of hydrogen is an instance of the general category "hydrogen atom." They are specific historical entities that have been shaped by the particular combination of historical forces, the specific colonial experience, the specific social structure, the specific cultural and religious traditions, the specific economic conditions, that produced them, and they can only be understood adequately in relation to those specific historical conditions. A theory of political parties developed from the experience of Western European liberal democracies, however rigorously developed and however well-supported by the evidence from which it was derived, cannot simply be applied to the Indian subcontinent as if the historical differences between Western Europe and South Asia were irrelevant.

This epistemological position has important practical implications for how social science research ought to be conducted and how its results ought to be used. It means that comparative analysis must be genuinely historical, tracing the specific historical processes that have produced different outcomes in different contexts rather than simply treating different cases as instances of the same general phenomenon. It means that policy recommendations cannot be derived from general theoretical models without careful attention to the specific historical and social conditions of the society to which they are to be applied. And it means that the boundaries between academic disciplines, between political science and economics, between sociology and

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history, between anthropology and legal theory, are obstacles to genuine understanding rather than useful analytical divisions, because the phenomena of social life do not respect disciplinary boundaries.

Empiricism, Reason, and the Enlightenment Legacy

Razzaq's epistemological position was not, however, simply a form of historicism that dissolved all general principles into historical particularity. He was committed to reason and to the empirical evaluation of claims, to the Enlightenment project of applying critical intelligence to all aspects of human life, including the political and cultural practices that communities tend to treat as sacred and beyond rational scrutiny. This commitment was, in the cultural and political context of the mid-twentieth-century Muslim Bengali world, itself a form of intellectual courage: the willingness to apply the same critical standards to the traditions and practices of one's own community as to those of others, to refuse the double standard that subjects others' beliefs and practices to critical scrutiny while exempting one's own from it.

The combination of historical epistemology with Enlightenment rationalism is not a contradiction, though it can appear to be one. The tension arises because Enlightenment rationalism has tended to express itself in universalist and ahistorical forms: the claim that reason is a faculty common to all human beings that transcends historical and cultural particularity, and that the application of reason to human affairs yields universal truths that are valid regardless of cultural and historical context. This universalist form of rationalism is difficult to reconcile with a historical epistemology that insists on the irreducible particularity of historical phenomena.

Razzaq's implicit resolution of this tension, which emerges from his analytical practice rather than from any explicit epistemological statement, was a form of what contemporary philosophers call "situated reason": reason that operates always from a specific historical and social position, that draws on the specific intellectual resources available in that position, but that is genuinely committed to the values of critical inquiry, empirical honesty, and openness to revision that the Enlightenment identified as the hallmarks of genuine rationality. This is not a relativistic position: it does not claim that all perspectives are equally valid or that there is no truth beyond what particular communities accept. It is a position that insists that the pursuit of truth is always situated, always conducted from a specific position in history and society, and that acknowledging this situatedness is a requirement of intellectual honesty rather than a concession to relativism.

The Method of Socratic Interrogation

Razzaq's philosophical commitments were most fully expressed not in abstract epistemological theorising but in his teaching method, in the specific way he engaged with students and interlocutors in the oral encounters that were the primary medium of his intellectual activity. The Socratic method of inquiry, the practice of advancing understanding through rigorous questioning rather than through the assertion of conclusions, was not merely a pedagogical technique for Razzaq; it was an expression of his epistemological convictions about how genuine understanding is produced and what it consists in.

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The Socratic insight that genuine understanding is not the passive reception of transmitted information but the active achievement of a mind working through a problem, testing its own assumptions, following arguments wherever they lead, and arriving at conclusions through its own activity rather than through the authority of a teacher, was one that Razzaq had clearly absorbed deeply. His refusal to provide direct answers, his habit of responding to questions with further questions, his insistence on making students think through problems rather than providing them with pre-packaged solutions, were all expressions of this conviction.

But the Socratic method, properly understood, is not merely a technique for producing active engagement in students. It is also an epistemological position: the claim that knowledge about human affairs, the kind of knowledge that politics, ethics, economics, and law aspire to, is not fixed and final in the way that mathematical knowledge is, that it is always provisional and open to revision, and that the appropriate attitude toward it is one of continued inquiry rather than confident possession. This epistemological humility, the recognition that the most important questions about human social life are not definitively answered and may never be, was characteristic of Razzaq's intellectual personality and was one of the things that made him so stimulating and so demanding as a teacher.

Chapter Eight: The Essays and Interviews - Thought in Its Most Immediate Form

Ahmed Sofa's "Jaddapi Amar Guru": The Teacher as Seen by a Student

Ahmed Sofa's memoir of Razzaq, "Jaddapi Amar Guru" (Though He Is My Teacher), is one of the most important documents in the Razzaq literature, not because it provides systematic philosophical analysis but because it provides the closest available approximation to the living experience of Razzaq as a teacher and intellectual presence. Sofa was one of Razzaq's most gifted students, and his memoir combines intellectual appreciation with personal affection in a way that conveys both the quality of Razzaq's thought and the quality of his character.

The memoir is particularly valuable for what it reveals about the texture of Razzaq's conversation and the specific ways in which his mind worked. Sofa's accounts of Razzaq's conversations show a man who was simultaneously deeply serious and genuinely playful, who could move in a single conversation from the most abstract theoretical questions to the most specific historical details, from the gravest analysis of political crisis to a story or joke that illustrated the same point in a completely different register. This combination of seriousness and playfulness was not a superficial personal quirk but an expression of a genuine intellectual disposition: the conviction that the full range of human experience, including its comic and ironic dimensions, is relevant to the project of understanding human life, and that a mind that can only operate in a single register of solemn gravity is a mind that has not fully grasped the complexity and diversity of what it is trying to understand.

Sofa's memoir also conveys something important about the specific intellectual content of Razzaq's teaching. One of the recurrent themes that emerges from his accounts is Razzaq's insistence on historical depth as the foundation of genuine political understanding. His

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conversations repeatedly return to the longue duree, to the deep historical processes that have shaped the specific political and social conditions of the present, to the ways in which seemingly contemporary problems have their roots in historical transformations that took place centuries or millennia ago. This historical depth was not mere erudition, not the display of historical knowledge for its own sake, but a methodological commitment: the conviction that without this historical depth, political analysis remains on the surface, treating contingent features of the present as if they were permanent features of human nature or inevitable consequences of universal laws.

Another theme that emerges from Sofa's memoir is Razzaq's consistent concern with what we might call the sociology of intellectuals: the question of how the social position of educated people, their class interests, their institutional affiliations, their relationships to power, shapes the content of their thinking in ways they often do not acknowledge. This reflexive dimension of Razzaq's thinking, his insistence on examining the social conditions that produce intellectual positions rather than treating ideas as if they existed in a social vacuum, was one of the most distinctive and important features of his intellectual method.

The Sardar Fazlul Karim Interviews: Political Thought in Dialogue

The book-length interview conducted by Sardar Fazlul Karim, based on extended conversations with Razzaq about the University of Dhaka, the history of East Bengal, and the political development of Bangladesh, provides a more systematic account of Razzaq's political and historical thinking than Sofa's more personal memoir. Fazlul Karim was himself a distinguished philosopher and intellectual, and his conversations with Razzaq were conducted between intellectual equals rather than between a reverent student and a venerated teacher, which gives them a different quality: they are debates as well as testimonies, and Fazlul Karim's own intellectual independence means that Razzaq's positions are tested and challenged rather than simply recorded.

The Fazlul Karim interviews are particularly valuable for their extended treatment of three questions that are central to Razzaq's political thought: the relationship between Islam and Bengali identity, the nature and origins of the Bangladesh independence movement, and the prospects for democratic governance in Bangladesh's specific social and economic conditions.

On the first question, the relationship between Islam and Bengali identity, Razzaq's position as expressed in the Fazlul Karim interviews is one of the most sophisticated available treatments of a problem that has generated enormous controversy and political conflict in Bangladesh's political culture. Razzaq refused the simple alternative between Islamic universalism, which would subordinate Bengali cultural identity to the identity of the global Muslim community, and secular nationalism, which would treat Islam as merely a personal religious matter irrelevant to political identity. He argued instead that Bengali Muslim identity was a genuinely historical product of the specific encounter between Islamic cultural and religious traditions and the specific ecological, linguistic, and cultural traditions of the Bengal delta, and that this specific historical product had its own integrity and its own political implications that could not be adequately captured by either Islamic universalism or secular nationalism.

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This position has important implications for political analysis and cultural policy. It means that the political assertion of Bengali cultural identity by the independence movement was not a departure from Islamic identity but an expression of the specific Islamic identity of the Bengali Muslim people, an identity shaped by centuries of living in the delta and speaking Bengali rather than by the abstract universalism of political Islam. It also means that the religious dimension of Bengali Muslim identity cannot simply be stripped away in the name of secular nationalism without doing violence to the actual cultural experience and self-understanding of the majority of the population.

The practical political implication of this analysis is a form of cultural pluralism that acknowledges both the importance of religious identity to Bengali Muslim self-understanding and the importance of Bengali cultural traditions as independently valuable dimensions of that identity. This pluralism is in tension with both the political Islamism that wants to make Islamic religious law the primary basis of political organisation and the secular nationalism that wants to marginalise religious identity from public life, and it is this tension that makes Razzaq's position on religion and identity genuinely difficult rather than merely sophisticated.

The Essay on Bengali Muslims: A Text for Our Time

Of all the texts associated with Razzaq, the essay on Bengali Muslims, variously described and referred to in different accounts of his work, is the one most frequently cited as his most significant contribution to understanding the specific cultural and political situation of his community. While the full text of this essay is not separately published and accessible in the way that "Political Parties in India" is, its content has been sufficiently described in subsequent commentary and in the accounts of students who read or heard it to allow a substantial reconstruction of its argument.

The essay's central question is the one that Razzaq returned to throughout his intellectual life: what is the specific identity of the Bengali Muslim people, and what are the implications of that identity for their political organisation and cultural development? The essay approaches this question through the historical analysis of how Bengali Muslim identity has been formed, transformed, and contested over the centuries, and through the comparative analysis of the different intellectual and political traditions that have tried to define and articulate that identity.

The historical argument of the essay traces the formation of Bengali Muslim identity through the long process of Islamic expansion into Bengal that began with the Turkish and Afghan conquests of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and continued through the Mughal period, the British colonial period, and into the twentieth century. This historical process was not the simple displacement of an indigenous Hindu-Buddhist culture by an imported Islamic one: it was a complex process of cultural interaction, assimilation, and transformation in which Islamic religious and cultural traditions were progressively integrated with the existing cultural traditions of the Bengal delta in ways that produced something genuinely new, something that was neither simply Islamic in the sense of reproducing the cultural forms of the Arab Middle East nor simply Bengali in the sense of continuing the pre-Islamic Hindu-Buddhist traditions unchanged.

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The product of this historical process, Bengali Muslim culture, has specific characteristics that distinguish it from the Islamic cultures of other regions and from the non-Muslim Bengali culture of West Bengal and Bangladesh's Hindu minority. These characteristics include the centrality of the Bengali language as the primary medium of cultural expression and religious practice, the distinctive folk musical and literary traditions associated with the Baul and other heterodox religious movements, the specific forms of agricultural and riverine life that have developed in the delta ecology, and the particular patterns of domestic and community life that have evolved in the specific social conditions of the Bengal delta.

Razzaq's argument was that the attempt to define Bengali Muslim identity primarily in terms of universal Islamic identity, to treat these culturally specific characteristics as secondary or inferior to the characteristics of "authentic" Islamic culture, was both historically inaccurate and politically disastrous. Historically inaccurate because it denied the genuine historical process through which Bengali Muslim culture had been formed, treating as mere deviation what was in fact the product of centuries of cultural creativity and development. Politically disastrous because the political mobilisation of Bengali Muslims around a definition of identity that systematically devalued their specific cultural characteristics in favour of an abstract universal Islamic identity created the conditions for exactly the kind of cultural and political domination, the imposition of Urdu as a national language, the subordination of Bengali cultural expression, the marginalisation of regional political interests, that the Pakistan movement had promised to transcend.

Chapter Nine: Psychology of Intellectual Character - The Interior of a Remarkable Mind

The Phenomenology of Intellectual Breadth

To understand Razzaq's intellectual achievement fully, it is necessary to attempt something that academic analysis rarely does: to engage with the phenomenological dimension of his intellectual life, with the inner experience of being the specific kind of mind that he was, with what it felt like from the inside to possess the breadth and depth of knowledge that the external accounts of his library and his conversations document.

The concept of intellectual breadth is frequently invoked but rarely analysed. It is typically understood merely quantitatively: a mind that knows many things in many fields. But genuine intellectual breadth, the kind that produces not merely encyclopaedic information but genuine synthetic understanding, is qualitatively different from mere multiplication of knowledge. It is a condition in which the knowledge from different fields is not merely stored in adjacent compartments but actively integrated, in which insights from one domain continuously illuminate and transform understanding in another, in which the connections between apparently unrelated fields are experienced as revelatory rather than merely coincidental.

The psychological literature on creativity, from Koestler's "The Act of Creation" to Sternberg's contemporary investment theory of creativity, consistently identifies the capacity for cross-domain connection as one of the most important psychological foundations of intellectual

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creativity. The person who can perceive, in the structure of a biological process, an analogy that illuminates a social or political process, who can use the analytical tools of one academic discipline to ask questions that that discipline's conventions prevent it from asking about its own subject matter, who can see in a historical event of one culture a parallel that illuminates a seemingly very different event in another culture: this person has a psychological capacity that is genuinely rare and that produces intellectual insights unavailable to those with narrower but perhaps deeper knowledge in a single field.

Razzaq's intellectual breadth appears, from the accounts of his students, to have been of exactly this integrative and creative kind. The library that the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation describes as reflecting a rich and restless mind with eclectic curiosities was not merely a collection of books on many subjects. It was the material expression of a mind that had genuinely integrated knowledge from many fields into a coherent, dynamic, continuously developing understanding of human social life in all its dimensions.

The Psychology of the Non-Writing Intellectual

One of the most psychologically interesting aspects of Razzaq's intellectual life is his relationship to writing, or rather his refusal of it. The conventional account, rehearsed in Part One of this textbook, treats his minimal written production primarily as a consequence of his perfectionism: his standards for his own written work were so high that he could never satisfy them, and the result was that most of what he thought and knew remained unwritten. This is certainly part of the story, and it is well-supported by the accounts of students who saw how he engaged with the written work of others, noticing every weakness in argument, every imprecision of language, every failure to follow the implications of a position to its logical conclusion.

But the perfectionistic account, while accurate, does not fully explain the extraordinary disproportion between the richness of his oral intellectual life, the conversations, the lectures, the teaching sessions that students have described in such vivid detail, and the thinness of his written production. A perfectionist who never publishes because nothing is ever quite good enough is a recognisable type in academic life, but Razzaq's engagement with the oral mode was not merely the residue of a failed writing project. His conversations had a quality of intellectual authority and completeness that suggests they were not mere substitutes for writing but the preferred and primary mode of intellectual expression for a mind that had thought deeply about the relationship between different modes of intellectual transmission.

The psychological insight that underlies the preference for oral over written transmission has been explored by thinkers from Plato to Vygotsky. Writing is a technology that enables the precise formulation and preservation of specific intellectual claims, the systematic organisation of argument, and the communication of thought across distances of space and time. These are genuine advantages. But writing also has specific limitations that oral communication does not share: it is monological rather than dialogical, unable to respond to the specific configuration of understanding and confusion present in a particular interlocutor at a particular moment; it is static rather than dynamic, unable to develop in response to feedback; and it is generalising rather than specific, necessarily addressed to an imagined general reader rather than to the

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specific person with the specific background and the specific questions who is sitting across from the teacher at a particular moment.

Razzaq's intellectual mode was fundamentally dialogical. His mind worked, it appears, through the encounter with other minds, through the specific challenges and questions that specific interlocutors posed, through the experience of feeling a student's understanding develop in response to a carefully chosen question or example. This dialogical mode was not a limitation or a substitute for the monological mode of writing; it was a different and in some respects more powerful mode of intellectual transmission, one better suited to the specific kind of understanding that Razzaq was trying to develop in his students.

Razzaq and the Problem of Intellectual Loneliness

There is, in the accounts of Razzaq's later years, a quality of intellectual loneliness that deserves acknowledgment. A person of his breadth and depth of knowledge, in a society and a university context that could not always match his standards of intellectual engagement, must at times have experienced the specific kind of isolation that belongs to those who are ahead of their contemporaries in their grasp of the questions they are dealing with. The conversations with students, as vivid and intellectually alive as the accounts make them seem, could not always have been conversations between equals; they were more often the one-sided transmission of a vastly superior understanding to minds that were still forming, however gifted those minds were.

The students who have documented their encounters with Razzaq mention, with remarkable consistency, the combination of intellectual generosity and intellectual standards that characterised his engagement with them. He was, by all accounts, an extraordinarily patient and encouraging teacher, willing to spend hours explaining and re-explaining, to follow a student's misunderstanding sympathetically to its roots and to rebuild the understanding from those roots. But he was also a teacher with standards that were not ultimately negotiable, who would not pretend to be satisfied when he was not, and who could make a student feel both the richness of what he had to offer and the inadequacy of the student's current grasp of it with equal precision.

This combination, of intellectual generosity and intellectual rigour, of patience and standards, of warmth and exactitude, is the combination that the accounts consistently describe, and it is a combination that suggests a personality of unusual integration: a man who had genuinely resolved the tension, common in intellectually gifted people, between the self-regarding demands of the intellect and the other-regarding demands of human relationship, between the pull toward the solitude required for serious thought and the pull toward the company and conversation that sustain the human spirit.

Chapter Ten: Comparative Philosophical Analysis - Razzaq in Global Intellectual Context

The Rawlsian Parallel: Justice as Structure

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One of the most illuminating frameworks for understanding Razzaq's political thought is the comparison with John Rawls, whose "A Theory of Justice" (1971) is the most influential work of political philosophy produced in the Western academic tradition in the second half of the twentieth century. The comparison is instructive not because Razzaq knew and engaged with Rawls, which he appears not to have done in any documented way, but because both thinkers were concerned with the same fundamental question: what are the structural conditions of a just political order, and how do specific societies' specific conditions relate to those structural requirements?

Rawls's argument in "A Theory of Justice" proceeds from an imaginary original position, a hypothetical situation in which individuals choose the principles of justice that are to govern their society without knowing what their specific position in that society will be. The result, Rawls argued, is a theory of justice organised around two principles: the principle of equal basic liberties for all, and the principle that inequalities are just only if they benefit the least advantaged members of society, the "difference principle." This framework, however abstract, is ultimately intended to yield conclusions about the just design of actual political, economic, and social institutions.

Razzaq's political thought, grounded in historical analysis rather than hypothetical thought experiments, reaches similar substantive conclusions through a very different method. His insistence that democratic governance requires not merely formal equal rights but substantive economic equality, that the formal equality of all citizens before the law is a hollow promise without the social and economic conditions that make that equality real in practice, is structurally similar to Rawls's difference principle: both require attention to the position of the least advantaged members of society as a fundamental test of the justice of a social arrangement.

But Razzaq's historically grounded approach also reveals important limitations in the Rawlsian framework. Rawls's theory is deliberately ahistorical: it seeks principles of justice that are valid for any society at any time, and it reaches those principles through a method, the original position, designed to abstract away from the specific historical conditions of particular societies. This ahistoricism, as critics from the communitarian tradition (Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer, Alasdair MacIntyre) and the postcolonial tradition (Charles Mills, Peng Cheah, Saidiya Hartman) have argued, makes it difficult to capture the ways in which specific historical injustices, the specific legacies of colonialism, slavery, and imperial domination, shape the actual conditions of justice in actually existing societies.

Razzaq's insistence on historical specificity is a corrective to this limitation. His analysis of how colonial policies produced the specific conditions of underdevelopment and political dysfunction in Bangladesh is not merely a historical description; it is an argument that justice in Bangladesh requires attention to these specific historical conditions and their consequences, not merely the application of abstract principles derived without reference to history. The justice due to a society whose economic development was systematically disrupted by imperial policy is not simply the same justice due to a society that developed without such disruption; it includes some form of acknowledgment and correction of the specific historical wrongs that produced the specific conditions of disadvantage.

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Habermas and Communicative Action: A Comparison

The German philosopher Jurgen Habermas, in his theory of communicative action developed in the late 1970s and 1980s, provides another illuminating point of comparison. Habermas argues that the fundamental normative basis of modern democratic life is not natural rights, utility, or social contract in the classical liberal sense but communicative rationality: the capacity of human beings to reach agreement through rational discourse, through the exchange of reasons that all participants can in principle evaluate and accept or reject.

On this view, a political order is genuinely legitimate not merely when it corresponds to some abstract principle of justice but when it is the product of a process of genuine rational discourse in which all affected parties can participate on equal terms and in which no voices are systematically silenced or distorted by relations of power. The Habermasian ideal of the "ideal speech situation," in which all participants are genuinely equal, all relevant perspectives are heard, and the only authority is the force of the better argument, is a utopian standard that no actual political process fully satisfies, but it provides a critical standard against which actual political discourse can be evaluated.

Razzaq's concern with the conditions of genuine democratic participation connects to this Habermasian framework in important ways. His insistence that formal democratic rights are insufficient without the substantive social and economic conditions that enable all citizens to exercise those rights, his analysis of the ways in which economic dependency and social inequality distort political communication, his concern with building the institutional conditions that protect independent thought and free expression: all of these express concerns that are directly parallel to the Habermasian concern with the conditions of genuine communicative rationality.

But Razzaq's historical and sociological approach also reveals limitations in Habermas's framework that are important to note. Habermas's theory is fundamentally proceduralist: it evaluates political arrangements primarily in terms of whether the process by which they were arrived at satisfied the requirements of genuine rational discourse, rather than in terms of their substantive content. This proceduralism can make it difficult to evaluate political arrangements in societies where the conditions for genuine rational discourse are structurally absent or severely compromised, as they were and are in much of the post-colonial world.

Razzaq's approach, grounded in the analysis of specific social and historical conditions, is better suited to evaluating political arrangements in these conditions precisely because it does not reduce political evaluation to procedural standards that cannot be satisfied in the absence of the structural conditions that enable genuine political participation. It asks, not merely whether the procedures of democratic governance are formally satisfied, but whether the social, economic, and institutional conditions that genuine democratic governance requires are present or absent, and what specifically needs to be done to build them where they are absent.

Amartya Sen and the Capabilities Approach: A Deep Convergence

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The convergence between Razzaq's economic and political thought and Amartya Sen's capabilities approach to human development, noted in Part One of this textbook, deserves more extended treatment here, because the convergence is not merely superficial but represents a deep agreement about the fundamental question of what human development is for and what it requires.

Sen's central argument, developed across "Development as Freedom" (1999) and the broader body of work on the capabilities approach, is that development should be understood as the expansion of human capabilities, the real freedoms that people have to live flourishing human lives. This means that the appropriate measure of development is not GDP or economic growth in the aggregate but the expansion of the real opportunities available to actual human beings, including the opportunity to live a long and healthy life, to receive an adequate education, to participate meaningfully in political and cultural life, to enjoy the material conditions of a decent existence, and to have one's basic dignity respected.

This approach requires attending to the specific conditions, economic, social, political, and cultural, that expand or restrict human capabilities in specific societies, and this means that development analysis cannot proceed from general models but must engage with the specific conditions of specific societies. A development strategy that increases average income while concentrating gains in the hands of a small elite, that improves aggregate nutritional statistics while leaving the most vulnerable populations behind, that achieves rapid industrialisation at the cost of the cultural and ecological practices that sustain meaningful ways of life for the majority of the population: these are not genuine development by the capabilities standard, regardless of their performance on conventional economic metrics.

Razzaq's approach to development in Bangladesh expressed exactly this capabilities orientation, developed independently and a quarter-century before Sen's formal articulation of the framework. His insistence that development strategies needed to be appropriate to the specific ecological and historical conditions of the Bangladesh delta, his concern with the welfare of the peasant majority rather than merely the modernisation of the elite, his integration of cultural and political concerns into his economic analysis, and his explicit connection of economic development to political freedom and the protection of democratic rights: all of these are expressions of a capabilities-oriented understanding of development that sees the expansion of human freedom and the improvement of human wellbeing as inseparable rather than as potentially competing goals.

Chapter Eleven: Political Controversies and Their Intellectual Dimensions

The Language Question and Its Political Philosophy

No controversy in Bangladeshi political and cultural life has been more defining than the Bengali Language Movement of 1952, and Razzaq's relationship to this movement and his analysis of its significance illuminate some of the most important dimensions of his political philosophy.

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The Language Movement began as a response to the Pakistani government's declaration that Urdu would be the sole national language of Pakistan, a declaration that was received in East Bengal as a direct assault on the cultural identity of the Bengali Muslim majority. The movement that mobilised in response to this declaration, culminating in the killings of student protesters on 21 February 1952 (now celebrated as International Mother Language Day), was not merely a political protest but a philosophical statement: the assertion that language is not merely a communication tool but a constitutive element of identity, that the imposition of a foreign language as the medium of official life and education is a form of cultural violence, and that the right to use one's mother tongue is a fundamental human right that no political authority can legitimately override.

Razzaq's analysis of the Language Movement went beyond the immediate political issues to engage with the deeper philosophical questions about the relationship between language, identity, and political community. His position, as reconstructed from the accounts of students and from his later writings, was that the Bengali language was not merely the preferred medium of communication of the majority of Pakistan's population but the primary vehicle of a specific cultural tradition, a specific way of experiencing and expressing human life, that had been formed over centuries and had produced a body of poetry, literature, music, and thought of extraordinary richness and depth.

The philosophical claim underlying this position is important: language is not a neutral medium through which a pre-existing identity expresses itself, but a constitutive element of identity, one of the primary means through which communities understand themselves, articulate their values, transmit their cultural heritage, and engage in the practices of collective self-determination. A community that is required to conduct its public life in a language other than its mother tongue is not merely inconvenienced: it is structurally disadvantaged in its capacity for genuine democratic participation, because the condition for meaningful democratic participation is the ability to express one's views clearly and persuasively, and this is only fully possible in one's own language.

This philosophical analysis of the relationship between language, identity, and democratic participation connects to the broader tradition of thinking about linguistic rights that has developed significantly in recent decades. The work of scholars like Will Kymlicka on minority rights and cultural membership, Charles Taylor on the politics of recognition, and Frantz Fanon on the cultural dimensions of colonial domination all engage with questions about the relationship between language, identity, and political freedom that Razzaq was navigating in the specific context of the Bangladesh Language Movement.

The Relationship with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Intellectual Influence and Political Distance

One of the most discussed and most debated aspects of Razzaq's political life is his relationship with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh and the dominant political figure of the independence movement. The relationship between the two men was close and intellectually significant: Mujibur Rahman was among the students whose intellectual formation Razzaq influenced, and the accounts of their relationship suggest that the political leader's

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understanding of Bengali identity, of the relationship between language and political community, and of the structural requirements of democratic governance owed something important to the teacher's analysis.

But the relationship was also characterised by what appears to have been a significant political distance, a reluctance on Razzaq's part to publicly endorse or affiliate with the Awami League as a political organisation even while he supported the independence movement as a political cause. This distance, and the reasons for it, are themselves politically and intellectually significant.

The most plausible explanation for Razzaq's political distance from the Awami League, consistent with his broader political analysis, is that he applied to it exactly the structural critique that he had applied to other post-colonial political parties in "Political Parties in India." The Awami League, like the Indian National Congress before it and the Muslim League before that, was an umbrella movement organised primarily around a charismatic leader and the single unifying cause of Bengali autonomy and independence rather than around a coherent programme of governance and policy. Its internal organisation, its relationship to its popular base, its capacity for programme-based politics after independence: all of these were questions that Razzaq's structural analysis would have raised, and to which the Awami League's performance after 1971 provided not entirely reassuring answers.

The establishment of a one-party state under the BAKSAL system in 1975, the suppression of political opposition and press freedom, the concentration of executive power in the hands of the president: these developments, which preceded the military coup and Mujibur Rahman's assassination by a few months, were precisely the kind of democratic regression that Razzaq's structural analysis had identified as the characteristic pathology of post-colonial political parties that lacked the structural preconditions for genuine democratic governance. His intellectual integrity, his refusal to exempt his own community's political leaders from the same critical analysis he applied to others, would have made him a critic of these developments even while he mourned the catastrophic violence that ended them.

The Question of Secularism and Its Limits

Another significant controversy in which Razzaq's analysis has important implications is the question of secularism in Bangladesh's constitutional and political culture. The 1972 constitution established secularism as one of the four state principles of Bangladesh, along with nationalism, democracy, and socialism. The subsequent removal of secularism as a constitutional principle under Ziaur Rahman and the introduction of Islam as the state religion in 1988 by General Ershad were among the most contested constitutional changes in Bangladesh's political history.

Razzaq's position on secularism was, characteristically, more nuanced than either the secular nationalist or the Islamic traditionalist alternatives. He was not a secular nationalist in the sense of wanting to strip Islam of any public political role or to treat it as merely a private matter of personal faith with no implications for public life. He understood too well the depth of Islamic identity and practice in Bengali Muslim culture, and the historical process through which that identity had been formed, to accept a secularism that required the privatisation of religious

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identity in a society where religion was genuinely constitutive of community life and public values.

But he was also not an Islamic traditionalist who wanted to make Islamic law the basis of the state and to define Bengali Muslim identity primarily in terms of orthodox religious practice. His historical analysis of how Bengali Muslim identity had actually been formed, through the long encounter between Islamic traditions and the specific cultural and ecological environment of the Bengal delta, demonstrated that Bengali Muslim culture was too rich, too complex, and too specifically rooted in the Bengal experience to be adequately captured by any simple assertion of Islamic universalism.

His position, as it can be reconstructed from the available evidence, was something like what contemporary political philosophers call "post-secular": a recognition that the clean separation between religion and public life that classical secular liberalism prescribes is not achievable in societies where religion is genuinely constitutive of community identity and public values, but that this recognition does not require abandoning the commitment to the equal dignity of all citizens regardless of their religious beliefs, to the protection of religious minorities, and to the maintenance of constitutional structures that prevent any single religious community from using state power to impose its beliefs on others.

Chapter Twelve: The Reception History and Its Lessons

The Evolution of Razzaq's Reputation: From Teacher to Monument

The transformation of Razzaq's reputation from that of a highly influential but locally known teacher to that of a national intellectual monument is itself a subject of historical and sociological interest. This transformation, which accelerated significantly after his death in 1999 and reached a new phase with the publication of "Political Parties in India" in 2022, illustrates broader patterns in the sociology of intellectual reputation and the dynamics of intellectual legacy formation.

During his lifetime, Razzaq's reputation was, in the first instance, an institutional one: the reputation of a great teacher within the specific institution of the University of Dhaka and among the specific community of scholars, students, and public intellectuals who had direct or indirect contact with him. This institutional reputation was itself extraordinary: there is no serious dispute among those who knew him or had worked with him that he was among the finest minds his institution had produced, and the quality of the students who acknowledge his influence, from economists to constitutional lawyers to cultural critics, is itself testimony to the quality of the influence.

But institutional reputations, however high, do not automatically translate into broader cultural significance. The translation from "great teacher at the University of Dhaka" to "intellectual architect of Bangladesh" required a process of cultural memorialisation that operated through several different mechanisms. The memoirs and tributes of students, above all Ahmed Sofa's

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"Jaddapi Amar Guru," played a crucial role in translating the specific experience of working with Razzaq into a publicly accessible narrative of his significance. The Foundation established in his name provided an institutional base for the continuation and propagation of his intellectual legacy. And the publication of "Political Parties in India" in 2022 provided, for the first time, a substantial text through which his intellectual achievement could be assessed independently of the oral tradition.

The sociology of intellectual reputation formation is a complex subject, and there are legitimate scholarly questions about the degree to which Razzaq's posthumous reputation has been shaped by hagiographic processes that exceed what the evidence strictly supports. These questions, raised in the review forum in the Journal of Global South Asia Dialogue, are important and should be taken seriously. The honest answer, as suggested in the analysis of "Political Parties in India," is that the quality of the thesis confirms the substantial accuracy of the reputation: the work is genuinely impressive, and the scholarly assessment of it confirms that the legendary status attributed to Razzaq by his students was grounded in real intellectual achievement.

But the hagiographic risk is real, and it is worth noting specifically what forms it takes in Razzaq's case. The most common hagiographic move in the accounts of Razzaq is the retrospective attribution of prescience: the presentation of his analyses as having predicted, with near-perfect accuracy, the subsequent political and social development of Bangladesh. This move is psychologically understandable and is not entirely dishonest, because his structural analyses did identify conditions and tendencies that subsequent events confirmed. But it needs to be balanced by a recognition that specific predictions are different from structural analyses, that identifying structural conditions conducive to certain outcomes is not the same as predicting those outcomes, and that the retrospective appearance of prescience can sometimes be the product of selective reading that notices the accurate anticipations and forgets the analyses that proved less prophetic.

The 2022 Publication and the New Phase of Scholarly Engagement

The publication of "Political Parties in India" in 2022 represents a genuine turning point in the scholarly engagement with Razzaq's legacy. For the first time, there is a substantial and publicly accessible text through which his intellectual achievement can be assessed by scholars who had no personal contact with him and who approach his work without the specific loyalty and personal admiration that characterised the accounts of his students.

The review forum in the Journal of Global South Asia Dialogue, published in connection with the 2022 launch, provides the best available example of this new phase of critical scholarly engagement. The reviewers, who included scholars from multiple disciplines and geographical locations, approached the text with a combination of genuine interest and analytical rigour that is appropriate to a serious academic work. Their assessments confirmed both the genuine quality of the thesis and the specific limitations that honest engagement requires acknowledging.

The genuine qualities identified by the reviewers include the historical depth and breadth of the analysis, the sophistication of the structural argument about the relationship between colonial legacy and democratic dysfunction, the prescience of the analysis of the Muslim League's

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structural problems, and the quality of the writing. These are not small achievements, and the reviewers were right to identify them as evidence of a mind of genuine intellectual distinction.

The limitations identified include the relative thinness of the self-reflexive analysis of the intelligentsia, the occasional moments where the historical claims have been superseded by subsequent scholarship, the limited engagement with the experiences and perspectives of peasant and working-class communities that the analysis is partly about but is conducted primarily from the perspective of the professional educated class, and some ambiguity about whether certain claims are primarily descriptive or normative.

These limitations are real but they do not detract from the overall quality and significance of the work. They are the normal limitations of a serious academic thesis written in a specific historical and intellectual context by a scholar at the beginning of his career, and they should be assessed against the standards of scholarship of the 1950s rather than against the standards of the 2020s.

Chapter Thirteen: Razzaq and Contemporary Bangladesh - An Intellectual's Ongoing Relevance

The Political Crisis and Its Structural Dimensions

Bangladesh in the early twenty-first century, particularly in the period from 2014 to 2024, experienced the kind of democratic regression that Razzaq's structural analysis of post-colonial political parties had identified as a characteristic pathology. The Sheikh Hasina government's increasing concentration of executive power, its suppression of political opposition through both legal and extra-legal means, its manipulation of the electoral system, and its use of state resources for partisan purposes: all of these expressed the structural dynamics that "Political Parties in India" and "Bangladesh: State of the Nation" had identified as the characteristic dysfunctions of political party systems in societies that lack the structural preconditions for genuine democratic governance.

The August 2024 student-led uprising that removed the Hasina government from power after fifteen years, the extraordinary popular mobilisation that expressed a fundamental rejection of authoritarian governance and demanded the restoration of genuine democratic accountability, and the subsequent period of transitional governance under Muhammad Yunus: these events cannot be fully understood without the kind of structural analysis that Razzaq's work provides. The uprising was not primarily a reaction to the specific policies or personal characteristics of a particular government: it was a rejection of the structural condition of domination, the concentration of power without accountability, the subordination of institutional independence to factional interest, that Razzaq had identified as the fundamental pathology of post-colonial political development.

The transitional challenge, building the institutional conditions for genuine democratic governance rather than merely replacing one form of concentrated power with another, is precisely the challenge that Razzaq's analysis defines as the central task of political development

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in post-colonial societies. The quality of the answer that Bangladesh develops to this challenge, whether it builds genuinely independent institutions, a genuinely independent judiciary, a genuinely free and pluralistic press, a genuinely autonomous civil society, the substantive conditions of genuine democratic accountability rather than merely its forms, will determine whether the 2024 uprising produces a lasting democratic transformation or merely another episode in the cycle of democratic promise and authoritarian regression that Bangladeshi politics has repeatedly enacted.

Development Economics in the Climate Emergency

Razzaq's ecological economic thinking takes on a new urgency in the context of the climate emergency that Bangladesh faces with particular severity in the 2020s. Bangladesh is consistently ranked among the countries most severely threatened by climate change, and the specific threats it faces, rising sea levels, intensification of cyclonic storms, changes in monsoon patterns, increased flooding frequency and severity, the intrusion of saline water into agricultural land, are precisely the kinds of ecological disruptions that Razzaq's analysis of the delta civilization as a specific human ecological system would identify as existential challenges.

The implications of the climate emergency for development economics in Bangladesh are exactly the implications that Razzaq's ecological economic thinking would suggest. Development strategies that increase aggregate economic output while degrading the ecological systems on which the majority of the population depends are not genuine development; they are the production of short-term gains at the cost of long-term catastrophe. The specific ecological conditions of the Bangladesh delta, its extraordinary fertility and its extraordinary vulnerability, require development thinking that takes those conditions seriously as fundamental parameters rather than as background externalities.

The international climate adaptation literature and the Bangladesh-specific climate adaptation planning that has developed in the 2010s and 2020s has largely arrived at this conclusion independently of Razzaq's analysis, though Bangladeshi development economists who have been formed in the intellectual tradition he helped create have been among the contributors to this literature. The convergence between Razzaq's ecological economic thinking and the contemporary climate adaptation literature is further confirmation that his approach, developed in the specific context of mid-twentieth-century Bengal, captures something genuinely important about the conditions of development in the specific ecological conditions of the delta.

Legal Institutions and Constitutional Resilience

The constitutional challenges that Bangladesh has faced throughout its history, the repeated modifications of the constitutional framework, the manipulation of constitutional provisions for partisan purposes, the subordination of judicial independence to executive pressure, the marginalisation of meaningful parliamentary oversight, are all expressions of the structural weakness of democratic institutions that Razzaq identified in his 1980 lecture. The question of how to build constitutional resilience, of how to design and embed institutional structures that can resist the structural pressures toward democratic regression, is among the most important practical questions in Bangladeshi politics in the 2020s.

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Contemporary constitutional theory, in the work of scholars like Tom Ginsburg and Aziz Huq on "How Democracies Die" and the broader comparative constitutional law literature, has developed sophisticated frameworks for understanding the dynamics of constitutional erosion and democratic decline. These frameworks, grounded in comparative analysis of constitutional failure and resilience across multiple democratic systems, confirm and extend the structural insights that Razzaq had articulated in the specific context of Bangladesh's political development.

The constitutional theory literature identifies several structural conditions that are associated with constitutional resilience: the genuine independence of the judiciary, the existence of a free and pluralistic press, the development of strong civil society organisations capable of holding governments accountable, the presence of genuinely competitive political parties with independent social bases rather than merely factional organisations dependent on state patronage, and the existence of a political culture in which democratic norms are genuinely internalised by all major political actors rather than merely observed when convenient. These are exactly the structural conditions that Razzaq's analysis identifies as the necessary foundations of genuine democratic governance, and the contemporary constitutional theory literature's independent arrival at the same conclusion is a confirmation of his analytical framework's validity.

Chapter Fourteen: Synthesis - What the Texts Tell Us About the Man and the Mind

The Unity of Razzaq's Intellectual Project

Having examined the major texts and arguments associated with Razzaq in the detail that Part Two's chapters have provided, it is now possible to attempt a synthesis: to identify the underlying unity that connects his political analysis in "Political Parties in India," his constitutional thinking about provincial autonomy and the rule of law, his ecological economic analysis of development in the Bengal delta, his philosophical commitments to historical epistemology and Enlightenment rationalism, and his pedagogical practice of Socratic inquiry into a coherent intellectual project.

The unity that connects these different dimensions of Razzaq's thought is not a single theoretical principle or a single ideological commitment. It is something more fundamental: a way of approaching intellectual problems, a method of inquiry, a set of commitments about how genuine understanding is produced and what it requires.

The method begins with historical particularity: the insistence that any phenomenon of human social life, any political organisation, any economic system, any legal structure, any cultural practice, can only be understood adequately in its specific historical context, in relation to the specific processes through which it came to be what it is. This is not a rejection of theory but an insistence that theory must be grounded in and tested against the specific historical evidence rather than applied to historical cases as a ready-made explanatory framework.

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The method proceeds through structural analysis: the identification of the deeper structural conditions, the social, economic, ecological, and institutional conditions, that produce the specific phenomena under analysis. This structural analysis goes beneath the surface of events and policies to identify the underlying conditions that make certain patterns of development likely and others unlikely, that create structural pressures toward certain outcomes and structural obstacles to others.

The method combines with normative commitment: the insistence that structural analysis is not merely descriptive but serves as a guide to the tasks that the achievement of genuinely desirable outcomes requires. Knowing the structural conditions that produce democratic failure is valuable not as mere academic knowledge but as a guide to the institutional building and social development that genuine democratic governance requires. The structural analysis is in the service of the normative project: the achievement of genuinely democratic, genuinely just, and genuinely sustainable political and economic arrangements.

And the method is animated throughout by a commitment to intellectual honesty: the refusal to exempt any political actor, any community, any intellectual tradition, any political programme, including one's own, from the critical analysis that genuine understanding requires. This intellectual honesty is not merely a personal virtue, though it is certainly that: it is an epistemological commitment, the recognition that understanding that is shaped by prior political commitment rather than by rigorous analysis of the evidence is not genuine understanding but ideology, and that ideology, however comforting in the short term, is ultimately more harmful than honest analysis because it prevents the recognition of problems that need to be addressed.

The Razzaq Standard: What Critical Engagement With His Legacy Requires

To engage genuinely with Razzaq's legacy, in the spirit that his own intellectual practice demands, is to do something more than celebratory commemoration. It is to apply to his work the same critical standards that he applied to others, to acknowledge its limitations as well as its achievements, to identify where his analysis has been confirmed and extended by subsequent scholarship and where it has been superseded or qualified, and to develop it further in relation to the theoretical and empirical resources that the present makes available.

This is what the best of the contemporary scholarship engaging with his work attempts. The review forum in the Journal of Global South Asia Dialogue, the scholarly commentaries that have followed the 2022 publication of "Political Parties in India," the growing body of academic work that situates his thinking in relation to contemporary theories of development, democracy, and post-colonial governance: all of this represents the kind of critical intellectual engagement that his legacy deserves and that he himself would have welcomed.

The standard that Razzaq sets is high: genuine breadth without superficiality, historical depth without antiquarianism, structural analysis without determinism, normative commitment without ideology, intellectual honesty without cruelty. These are standards that no one always meets and that many never approach. But they are the standards that genuine intellectual engagement requires, and they are the standards that the study of Razzaq's life and work is intended to instil.

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Chapter Fifteen: The Living Argument - Razzaq's Questions as Our Questions

What Remains Unresolved

The questions that Razzaq devoted his intellectual life to do not have final answers, and this is one of the most important things about them. The question of what conditions genuine democratic governance requires, and what specifically needs to be done to build those conditions in societies that lack them, is not a question that any text or argument can definitively resolve: it is a question that has to be worked through, by specific societies in specific historical circumstances, through a process of political experimentation, institutional learning, and continuous critical reflection that is never complete.

The question of how Bengali Muslim identity is to be understood in relation to both its Islamic and its specifically Bengali dimensions, and what political arrangements best correspond to the complexity of that identity, is not a question that any text or argument can definitively answer: it is a question that the people who carry that identity need to work through in dialogue with each other and with the historical traditions that have formed them, in the light of the specific challenges and opportunities of their current situation.

The question of how Bangladesh is to develop an economy that sustains its large and growing population within the specific ecological conditions of the delta, in the context of a climate emergency that is rapidly intensifying those conditions, is not a question that any development model, however sophisticated, can answer in advance: it requires the kind of specific, context-sensitive, ecologically informed development thinking that Razzaq's approach demands, applied with the full force of contemporary ecological economics, development theory, and climate science.

These are not comfortable conclusions. They suggest that the wisdom of Razzaq's legacy does not provide ready-made answers to Bangladesh's political, economic, and cultural questions. What it provides is something more valuable and more demanding: a way of approaching those questions, a method of inquiry, a set of intellectual standards, and a model of intellectual courage, that are necessary conditions of any adequate engagement with them.

The Ongoing Task of Political Education

One of the most important dimensions of Razzaq's legacy, the one that his students consistently emphasise as the most personally significant aspect of his influence on their intellectual lives, is the transformation of their capacity for political thought: the development of the ability to think about political questions with the combination of historical depth, structural analysis, normative seriousness, and intellectual honesty that genuine political understanding requires.

This transformation of intellectual capacity is not a one-time achievement but a continuing practice. The political education that Razzaq provided was not the transmission of a fixed body of knowledge but the development of a capacity for inquiry, a capacity that his students have

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continued to exercise throughout their intellectual lives and that they have transmitted, in turn, to their own students and interlocutors. The chain of intellectual transmission that runs from Razzaq through his students to the current generation of Bangladeshi scholars, journalists, lawyers, economists, and political analysts represents one of the most important legacies that a teacher can leave: not a fixed body of doctrine but a living tradition of critical inquiry.

The continuing vitality of this tradition is evident in the quality and seriousness of the contemporary Bangladeshi intellectual culture that engages with the questions Razzaq raised: in the scholarship of the economists and political scientists who are grappling with the structural challenges of Bangladesh's political and economic development, in the journalism of those who hold power accountable with the kind of structural understanding that Razzaq's analysis provides, in the constitutional lawyering that insists on the substantive as well as formal dimensions of democratic rights, and in the cultural and literary work that engages seriously with the complexity of Bengali Muslim identity and its continuing negotiation between Islamic universalism and specifically Bengali cultural particularity.

Conclusion of Part Two: The Texts and the Mind They Reveal

This second part of the textbook has attempted to do justice to the specific intellectual content of Razzaq's legacy: to analyse the major texts with the care and rigour they deserve, to trace the specific arguments through their implications, to evaluate them against the standards of contemporary scholarship, and to identify their continuing relevance to the theoretical and practical questions of the present.

What emerges from this detailed textual engagement is a picture of an intellectual whose specific analytical contributions, in the political sociology of post-colonial party systems, in the constitutional theory of democratic preconditions and provincial autonomy, in the ecological economics of development in deltaic conditions, and in the cultural analysis of the specific formation of Bengali Muslim identity, are genuinely significant and genuinely original. These are not contributions that merely summarise or apply the work of others; they are contributions that offer specific new insights, grounded in the specific historical experience of the Bengal delta, that extend and in some respects correct the theoretical frameworks available to Razzaq from his London School of Economics formation and from his extensive engagement with Western intellectual traditions.

The paradox that Part One identified, of a thinker who exercised profound influence while leaving almost no written record, is partially but significantly resolved by the recovery of "Political Parties in India" and by the reconstruction of his thought through the testimonies of his students. The text confirms that the legendary reputation was grounded in genuine intellectual achievement, while the testimonies of his students confirm that the specific quality of his oral intellectual engagement, his Socratic method, his historical depth, his willingness to follow argument wherever it led, his intellectual courage and personal integrity, were as extraordinary as the accounts suggested.

The subsequent parts of this textbook will take up the further dimensions of his legacy: his role in the Bangladesh independence movement (Part Three), the reception and interpretation of his

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ideas in post-independence Bangladesh and their implications for Bangladesh's continuing political development (Part Four), his contribution to Oriental Studies and comparative civilisational analysis (Part Five), and the final synthetic assessment of his intellectual achievement and its ongoing significance for the theoretical and practical questions of the twenty-first century (Part Six).

The purpose throughout is not to create a monument but to sustain an argument, the argument that Razzaq himself was making: that the quality of political life depends on the quality of political understanding, that the quality of political understanding depends on the willingness to engage with history, with structural analysis, and with the full complexity of the specific conditions in which one finds oneself, and that the most important thing a teacher can do is to develop in students the capacity and the courage for this kind of engagement.

This argument does not age. It was true when Razzaq first articulated it in his lecture halls in the 1940s and 1950s, it was true when he elaborated it in his 1980 lecture to a Bangladesh trying to find its political footing, and it is true now, in a Bangladesh and a world facing political, ecological, and economic challenges that will not yield to anything less than the full honesty, depth, and rigor of analysis that Razzaq modelled.

Selected Bibliography and Further Reading for Part Two

Primary texts for Part Two begin with "Political Parties in India" by Abdur Razzaq, published by the University Press Limited of Bangladesh in 2022, with an introduction by Salimullah Khan, and this text should be the starting point for any serious engagement with Razzaq's intellectual legacy. The text is essential reading and should be studied alongside the review forum published in the Journal of Global South Asia Dialogue in 2022 and the additional commentaries available from the University of Virginia's South Asia program.

"Bangladesh: State of the Nation," Razzaq's 1980 lecture, is available in published form with Salimullah Khan's extended analytical commentary. Khan's commentary is itself an important scholarly text that develops Razzaq's political analysis in relation to subsequent developments in Bangladeshi political history.

Ahmed Sofa's "Jaddapi Amar Guru" (Though He Is My Teacher) remains indispensable for understanding the personal and pedagogical dimensions of Razzaq's intellectual character, and no reading of the institutional accounts or academic analyses should substitute for engagement with this more personal and literary testimony.

Sardar Fazlul Karim's interview-based book provides the most systematic available account of Razzaq's views on the history of the University of Dhaka and on East Bengali social and political history more broadly. Fazlul Karim's own intellectual stature makes this a dialogue between significant minds rather than merely a record of a great man's opinions.

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For the theoretical frameworks deployed in Part Two's analysis, the following texts are foundational. John Rawls's "A Theory of Justice" (1971) and "Political Liberalism" (1993) provide the liberal political philosophy framework against which Razzaq's structural political analysis can be productively compared and contrasted. Philip Pettit's "Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government" (1997) provides the neo-republican framework whose concept of non-domination illuminates important dimensions of Razzaq's constitutional thinking. Amartya Sen's "Development as Freedom" (1999) provides the capabilities framework that converges most closely with Razzaq's economic philosophy.

For the colonial and post-colonial context, Ranajit Guha's "A Rule of Property for Bengal" (1963) provides essential background on the Permanent Settlement and its consequences for Bengal's agrarian history. Partha Chatterjee's "The Nation and Its Fragments" (1993) and "A Possible India" (1997) provide important theoretical frameworks for understanding Bengali nationalism and its complexities. Ayesha Jalal's "The Sole Spokesman" (1985) is essential for understanding the Muslim League and the Pakistan movement from the historian's perspective most complementary to Razzaq's political sociological analysis.

For the comparative constitutional theory dimension, Tom Ginsburg and Aziz Huq's "How Democracies Die" (2018), Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way's "Competitive Authoritarianism" (2010), and Martin Krygier's work on the rule of law in post-communist and post-colonial societies provide the contemporary comparative politics framework that connects most directly to Razzaq's structural analysis of democratic preconditions.

Finally, for the ecological economic dimension, Kanchan Chopra and Chiranjib Sengupta's work on the economics of the Bengal delta, along with the extensive contemporary literature on climate adaptation in Bangladesh produced by institutions including the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, provides essential context for understanding the continuing relevance of Razzaq's ecological economic thinking in the twenty-first century.

End of Part Two. Part Three will examine Razzaq's role in the Bangladesh independence movement, his advisory relationship to the political leadership of the liberation struggle, his analysis of the conditions that made independence necessary and possible, and the intellectual dimensions of the movement that brought Bangladesh into existence in 1971.

PART THREE: THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE LIBERATION — ABDUR RAZZAQ, THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT, AND THE INTELLECTUAL ARCHITECTURE OF BANGLADESH

The Making of a Nation Through the Mind of Its Most Reluctant Celebrant

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Preface to Part Three

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Parts One and Two of this textbook traced the intellectual formation of Professor Abdur Razzaq from his birth in 1914 in the village of Paragram through his years at the University of Dhaka, his London period under Harold Laski at the London School of Economics, his return to Dhaka and his decades of teaching that would prove transformative for an entire generation of Bengali thinkers and political leaders, and the specific textual record that his career produced, including the thesis on political parties in India, the 1980 lecture on Bangladesh: State of the Nation, and the rich body of thought reconstructable through the testimonies of his students and the secondary literature of his admirers and critics. Those two parts established the portrait of a man whose intellectual achievement was extraordinary by any standard, and whose influence on the political and intellectual life of Bangladesh was both profound and pervasive, even though it expressed itself primarily through the oral tradition of teaching rather than through the conventional written output of academic scholarship.

Part Three now takes up what is, in some respects, the most dramatic and historically consequential dimension of Razzaq's life: his relationship to the long process through which Bangladesh came into existence as an independent nation-state in 1971. This relationship was complex, indirect, and philosophically subtle in ways that simple narratives of heroic participation in a liberation struggle do not adequately capture. Razzaq was not a political organiser in the conventional sense, not a man who led marches or organised party branches or gave rousing speeches to mass audiences in the manner of the politicians who surrounded him. He was a teacher, a thinker, a man who shaped minds rather than mobilised crowds, and his contribution to Bangladesh's independence was made through the medium of those minds: through the thousands of students who passed through his lecture halls and seminars and who went on to careers in politics, journalism, law, economics, and public service, carrying with them the frameworks of analysis, the habits of critical inquiry, and the political convictions that his teaching had shaped.

Among those students was Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who would become the founding father and first President of Bangladesh, and whose political vision, while shaped by many forces, bore the clear marks of Razzaq's influence in its commitment to Bengali cultural identity as the foundation of political community, in its insistence on the democratic accountability of political leadership, and in its structural understanding of the economic conditions that a viable Bangladeshi state would need to address. The relationship between Razzaq and Mujib is one of the most interesting and underanalysed dimensions of Bangladesh's political history, and Part Three gives it the sustained attention it deserves.

But the relationship between Razzaq and the liberation movement is also the relationship between a specific philosophical tradition, the tradition of Laskian democratic socialism mediated through a deep engagement with Bengali historical experience, and the specific political process through which Bangladesh was created. Understanding this relationship means understanding both what that philosophical tradition contributed to the liberation movement and what the liberation movement, with its specific dynamics of popular mobilisation, military confrontation, and external diplomatic pressure, did to and with that philosophical tradition. The relationship was not simply one of theory preceding and guiding practice; it was a more complicated, more dialectical, and ultimately more instructive relationship in which theory and practice shaped each other in ways that neither could fully predict or control.

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This part is organised in fifteen chapters that together trace the full arc of this relationship. The first group of chapters examines the political context of the 1950s and 1960s in East Pakistan, the development of Bengali political consciousness, and Razzaq's specific role in shaping the intellectual foundations of the movement for Bengali autonomy and ultimately independence. The second group of chapters examines the crisis of 1971 itself, Razzaq's personal experience of the liberation war, his survival of the March massacre, his life in hiding, and his trial in absentia by the Pakistani military court. The third group of chapters examines the intellectual analysis that underlies the liberation movement: Razzaq's understanding of why Pakistani unity had failed, what Bengali identity required politically, and what kind of state Bangladesh needed to become. The fourth group of chapters examines the immediate post-independence period, Razzaq's recognition as a National Professor, his relationship to the Mujib government, and the intellectual challenges of building a new state in conditions that he had, in some respects, predicted would be extremely difficult. The final group of chapters synthesises these themes and offers a comprehensive philosophical assessment of the relationship between Razzaq's thought and the larger questions of self-determination, nation-building, and democratic state formation that Bangladesh's creation exemplifies.

Throughout, the analysis is placed in dialogue with contemporary scholarship on nationalism, liberation movements, postcolonial state formation, and the intellectual history of South Asian politics, drawing on the most recent theoretical and empirical work to illuminate both the historical specificity and the continuing theoretical relevance of Razzaq's engagement with these questions.

CHAPTER ONE: THE EAST PAKISTAN CONTEXT — WHAT RAZZAQ SAW AND WHAT IT MEANT

The Structure of Domination

To understand why a thinker of Razzaq's disposition, a man who by temperament and conviction preferred the life of the mind to the turbulence of political action, became so deeply implicated in the movement for Bengali independence, one must begin with the structural reality of East Pakistan as it existed from 1947 to 1971. This was not a political situation that any serious intellectual could observe from a position of detached neutrality. It was a situation of systematic domination, of the kind that Razzaq's training in political sociology equipped him to analyse with precision, and of the kind that his moral commitment to democratic governance and human dignity made it impossible for him simply to accept.

The creation of Pakistan in August 1947 had brought into existence a state with a fundamental structural contradiction at its heart. The new state contained two geographically separated and culturally distinct regions connected by the shared religious identity of their Muslim majority populations but divided by almost everything else: language, history, cultural tradition, economic structure, social organisation, and demographic weight. East Bengal, which became East Pakistan, contained a majority of Pakistan's total population but was separated from the western wing by nearly two thousand kilometres of Indian territory. This geographic separation was not

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merely a logistical inconvenience; it was an expression of the fundamental political problem that the two-nation theory, which had provided the ideological justification for partition, had papered over rather than resolved.

The two-nation theory held that Hindus and Muslims in the Indian subcontinent constituted two separate nations whose interests were irreconcilably different and who therefore required separate states. The theory was powerful as a mobilising ideology for the Pakistan movement because it provided a simple and emotionally compelling answer to the question of Muslim political identity in a Hindu-majority India. But as Razzaq had already argued in his 1950 thesis on political parties, and as he would continue to argue through his teaching in the decades that followed, the two-nation theory was analytically flawed in a fundamental way: it mistook a religious category for a political community. The fact that a majority of East Bengalis and a majority of West Pakistanis were Muslim did not make them a single nation in any politically meaningful sense. A nation, as Razzaq understood it through his engagement with the democratic socialist tradition from Laski and before him through J.S. Mill and the broader liberal tradition, is constituted not by religious identity but by the capacity of a population to govern itself through shared institutions, to deliberate collectively about its common good, and to produce from that deliberation legitimate political authority.

East Bengal and West Pakistan had none of the prerequisites for genuine political unity of this kind. They shared a religious identity but nothing else that was politically foundational: not a language, not a legal tradition, not a shared history, not economic complementarity, not even geographic contiguity. The attempt to hold them together as a single political unit was, from the outset, an exercise in political coercion masquerading as cultural solidarity. Razzaq understood this not merely as a matter of academic political theory but as a matter of lived social reality observable all around him in the streets, institutions, and daily life of Dhaka.

The specific form that the coercion took was the systematic domination of East Pakistan by the West Pakistani political and military elite. This domination operated at multiple levels simultaneously. At the constitutional level, it expressed itself in the repeated attempts to deny East Bengal the full electoral weight of its demographic majority: first through the principle of parity between the two wings in the central legislature, which gave the less populous western wing equal representation with the more populous eastern wing, and later through constitutional arrangements that concentrated executive power in the presidency while marginalising the national assembly where Bengali numbers could translate into political influence. At the economic level, it expressed itself in the systematic transfer of resources from East Pakistan to West Pakistan through a variety of mechanisms including export earnings from East Pakistan's jute trade being used to finance West Pakistan's industrialisation, preferential allocation of development funds to the western wing, and the domination of the federal bureaucracy and military officer corps by West Pakistanis who used their institutional positions to direct economic benefits to their own region.

At the cultural and linguistic level, the domination was most direct and most personally felt by the Bengali population. The attempt to impose Urdu as the sole official language of Pakistan, despite the fact that Urdu was the mother tongue of a tiny minority of Pakistan's population and was spoken by very few Bengalis, was experienced not just as a practical inconvenience but as a

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fundamental attack on Bengali cultural identity and human dignity. The Bengali Language Movement of 1952, in which students and activists who had taken to the streets to protest the Urdu imposition were shot by police on 21 February, producing martyrs whose memory became the foundational mythology of Bangladeshi national consciousness, was the first major collective expression of East Bengali resistance to Pakistani cultural domination, and it announced, to those capable of reading the political evidence, that the cultural foundation of Pakistani unity was a fiction.

Razzaq's Analytical Framework for the Crisis

Razzaq's capacity to understand the East Pakistan situation with such clarity derived not merely from his personal experience of living within it, though that experience was obviously important, but from the analytical frameworks that his intellectual formation had provided him. Several of these frameworks deserve explicit identification because they were not merely background assumptions but active analytical tools that he applied to the specific conditions he observed.

The first was the framework of structural political sociology derived from his reading of Laski and the broader tradition of democratic socialist political theory. This framework directed attention not to the surface of political events, to the speeches of politicians and the decisions of legislators, but to the underlying structural conditions that determined what kinds of political outcomes were possible and what kinds were not. In the case of East Pakistan, this structural analysis pointed immediately to the fundamental incompatibility between the geographic, demographic, economic, and cultural realities of the two wings and the political arrangements that were attempting to hold them together. The surface of Pakistani politics, with its constitutional debates, its political parties, its elections and governments, was, from this structural perspective, less important than the underlying structural conditions that were making genuine democratic unity impossible.

The second framework was the historical analysis of the specific trajectory of Muslim political organisation in South Asia that his thesis on political parties had developed. This analysis showed how the logic of communal political organisation, in which communities mobilise politically on the basis of religious identity rather than shared material interests or political convictions, tends to produce a politics of symbolic claims and cultural assertion rather than a politics of genuine democratic governance. The Pakistani state had been created through a process of communal mobilisation based on the Muslim identity of its citizens, but the creation of the state had not resolved the political questions that genuine democratic governance requires to be addressed: questions of how power is distributed, how resources are allocated, how minority interests are protected, how political accountability is maintained. The failure to address these questions was what was producing the structural crisis of Pakistani democracy.

The third framework was the understanding of Bengali cultural identity and its specific historical formation that Razzaq had developed through his reading of Bengali history and his extended conversations with historians, literary scholars, and cultural critics. This understanding insisted on the specificity and depth of Bengali cultural identity as a form of community, a community constituted not by religious allegiance alone but by shared language, shared aesthetic sensibility, shared ecological relationship to the delta landscape, and shared historical experience of both

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achievement and oppression. The attempt to subordinate this cultural identity to a political unity defined solely by religious allegiance was, from this perspective, not merely politically unwise but culturally destructive, an attack on the conditions of a community's self-understanding and self-expression that could only be resisted.

The fourth framework was the theory of democratic preconditions that Razzaq had developed through his engagement with Laski and with the broader tradition of democratic socialist political thought. This theory held, as Part Two of this textbook examined in detail, that genuine democratic governance requires not merely formal democratic institutions but substantive social, economic, and educational conditions without which formal democracy cannot function effectively. The application of this framework to East Pakistan pointed in a complex direction: not simply that Pakistan was undemocratic, which was obvious, but that the specific conditions of East Pakistan's society, including its levels of education, its economic development, its civil society institutions, and its political culture, would determine whether a Bengali political community was capable of sustaining democratic self-governance, and what kinds of institutional arrangements and development policies would be needed to create the conditions for such governance.

These four frameworks, taken together, constituted what might be called Razzaq's structural diagnosis of the East Pakistan crisis. The diagnosis was not a simple prescription for independence; it was, initially, an analysis of what genuine political self-determination for the Bengali people would require, and that analysis did not necessarily point to a separate state as the only possible answer. What it pointed to was the absolute necessity of genuine Bengali political autonomy, of arrangements that gave the Bengali people effective control over their own political, economic, and cultural affairs, and that protected Bengali cultural identity from the kind of coercive homogenisation that Pakistani cultural nationalism was attempting to impose.

The question of whether such autonomy could be achieved within a Pakistani state or only through the creation of a separate state was a question that Razzaq did not rush to answer. His intellectual formation had taught him to be wary of simple political solutions to complex structural problems, and the creation of a new state was, as his knowledge of history made clear, itself a complex undertaking that could solve some problems while creating others. His caution on this point distinguished him from the more straightforwardly nationalist politicians in his circle, and it would occasionally produce tensions between his analytical perspective and the political imperatives of a movement that required simple, mobilising commitments rather than complex, conditional analyses.

CHAPTER TWO: THE TEACHER OF POLITICAL LEADERS — THE MUJIB RELATIONSHIP AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The Student Who Would Be Father of a Nation

No single relationship in Razzaq's career more powerfully illustrates the unusual nature of his intellectual influence than his relationship with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who would go on to

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lead the Bangladesh independence movement and become the founding father of the new state. The relationship between a teacher and a student who becomes a historical world-figure is always complex, always generating interpretive controversy about who influenced whom and how, and always tempting simplification in the direction of either hagiography, in which the great teacher is credited with everything, or of dismissal, in which the student's own political genius is presented as entirely self-generated. The Razzaq-Mujib relationship requires more careful treatment than either of these extremes.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was, according to all available accounts, a student of Razzaq's at the University of Dhaka in the late 1940s, during the period after Mujib had returned from Islamia College in Calcutta and was pursuing studies at Dhaka. The precise nature and duration of this student-teacher relationship is not documented with the kind of archival precision that would satisfy the most demanding historical standards, but the substance of the relationship is attested to by multiple independent sources and is not seriously in question. What is in question, and what is historically interesting, is the specific nature of what Razzaq gave to Mujib and what Mujib made of it.

The most direct testimony comes from the accounts of other students who shared Razzaq's seminars with Mujib and observed their interactions. These accounts consistently describe Mujib as an unusually attentive student in Razzaq's classes, someone who had neither the strongest academic record among Razzaq's students nor the deepest intellectual interests in pure theory, but who possessed an exceptional capacity for understanding the political implications of Razzaq's analytical frameworks and for translating those frameworks into practical political judgments. Mujib was, in Razzaq's seminars, the student who asked not what the theory meant in abstract terms but what it meant for the specific political situation of the Bengali people, who pushed Razzaq to connect his structural analysis to the concrete political choices that political actors faced.

This is a significant observation. It suggests that the student-teacher relationship between Mujib and Razzaq was not a simple transmission of political doctrine from master to disciple, but a more genuinely intellectual exchange in which the different abilities and orientations of the two men shaped what each took from the encounter. Razzaq gave Mujib the analytical frameworks, the structural understanding of how political systems work and fail, the historical depth that located the specific crisis of Bengali political identity in a longer narrative of commercial achievement and colonial disruption and cultural formation. Mujib gave Razzaq, reciprocally, the practical political intelligence that tested those frameworks against the urgency of the specific situation, that asked where the structural analysis led in terms of what needed to be done, that demanded the translation of structural insight into political programme.

The specific intellectual contributions of Razzaq's teaching to Mujib's political vision are identifiable in several dimensions of Mujib's political thought and programme. The most important is the primacy of Bengali cultural identity as the foundation of political community. The insistence, which was central to Mujib's political project and which found its most famous expression in his 1971 declaration that "this struggle is our struggle for emancipation, this struggle is our struggle for independence," that the Bengali people constituted a political community deserving of self-determination on the basis of their cultural identity and not merely

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their religious affiliation, is clearly consistent with the political theory that Razzaq had developed in his seminars and conversations over many years. The rejection of the Pakistani two-nation theory's reduction of political identity to religious allegiance, the insistence that language and culture and shared historical experience constitute the authentic basis of political community, the understanding that the Bengali nation in its fullness included Hindus and Muslims and members of all communities who shared the Bengali language and culture: all of these convictions, which were central to Mujib's political philosophy, were convictions that Razzaq's teaching had shaped and articulated.

The second intellectual dimension is the structural understanding of economic injustice as a political grievance. The Six Point Programme that Mujib articulated in 1966 and that became the political platform of the Awami League in the 1970 elections was not simply a list of political demands; it was a structural analysis of the economic relationship between East and West Pakistan and its political implications. The argument that East Pakistan was being systematically exploited economically, that its export earnings were being transferred to finance West Pakistan's development, that Bengali people needed control over their own economic resources as a prerequisite for genuine political autonomy, is an argument that draws directly on the kind of structural economic analysis that Razzaq had been developing in his teaching of political economy and its relationship to political power. The specific mechanisms of economic exploitation that the Six Points identified, the separate foreign exchange accounts, the separate fiscal policies, the provisions for a separate trade regime, are the kind of structural remedies that a mind trained in political economy would reach for in designing a programme to address structural economic domination.

The third dimension is the understanding of democratic institutions and their preconditions. Mujib's commitment, maintained throughout his political career even as it was contradicted in practice during the BAKSAL period, to parliamentary democracy and to the accountability of political leaders to an elected legislature, reflects the Laskian democratic theory that Razzaq had transmitted to his students. The insistence that political authority must be grounded in popular consent expressed through genuine electoral competition, that political parties must be genuinely representative of their constituencies rather than vehicles for the personal ambition of charismatic leaders, that the rule of law must operate as a genuine constraint on political power rather than as a tool of that power: all of these commitments are consistent with Razzaq's political philosophy, even when Mujib's own practice fell short of them.

The Limits of the Teacher's Influence

It is necessary, in the spirit of intellectual honesty that Razzaq himself embodied and that his legacy demands, to acknowledge the limits of his influence on Mujib and on the liberation movement more broadly. These limits are as instructive as the influences, and their acknowledgment strengthens rather than weakens the case for Razzaq's intellectual significance by demonstrating that his thought engaged with real political complexity rather than providing a simple formula that political actors could apply straightforwardly.

The most important limit concerns the relationship between political theory and political practice in conditions of mass mobilisation. Razzaq's analytical frameworks were sophisticated tools for

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understanding political situations in their structural depth and complexity. But the leadership of a mass liberation movement requires a different kind of political communication: the ability to express the structural situation in simple, emotionally compelling terms that activate popular commitment rather than analytical understanding, that create the collective identity and will necessary for political action rather than the critical distance necessary for analysis. Mujib possessed this capacity of political communication to an extraordinary degree; it was, arguably, his greatest political gift. Razzaq, by temperament and conviction, was deeply sceptical of this kind of political mobilisation, recognising both its power and its dangers.

The danger that Razzaq recognised in mass political mobilisation was the danger of what he sometimes described, in his seminars, as the creation of political emotions that outlast the political conditions that generated them and that therefore become available for manipulation by political actors whose purposes are quite different from those of the original movement. The mass emotional energy released by a liberation movement, the sense of collective identity and shared sacrifice and victorious struggle, is a powerful political resource, but it is a resource that can be captured by authoritarian politics just as easily as by democratic politics, and that, indeed, is particularly vulnerable to authoritarian capture in conditions where the institutional foundations of democratic governance are weak.

This concern expressed itself in Razzaq's famous caution about the role of the military in the new Bangladeshi state, a caution that he articulated in conversations with political leaders during the period leading up to independence. The accounts of those conversations, preserved in the memoirs of participants and in the testimony of students who had access to Razzaq's thinking at the time, indicate that he consistently warned against giving the military a prominent role in the post-independence political structure. His argument was not simply that military involvement in politics is dangerous in the abstract, though he believed that too, but that the specific conditions of the post-independence period, with the incomplete development of civilian democratic institutions, the economic challenges of reconstruction, and the psychological aftereffects of a violent liberation struggle, would make the military particularly tempting as an instrument of political order and particularly dangerous as a threat to democratic governance. The subsequent history of Bangladesh, with its sequence of military coups and periods of military rule, gave this warning an authority that must have been painful for those who had not heeded it.

The second limit concerns the relationship between intellectual analysis and political commitment. Razzaq was a man who believed, deeply and consistently, that genuine political understanding requires intellectual honesty, including the willingness to acknowledge the weaknesses of one's own political camp and the validity of arguments that one finds politically inconvenient. This intellectual honesty was both his greatest intellectual virtue and a source of political difficulty in the context of a liberation movement that required the kind of unqualified commitment that intellectual honesty tends to complicate.

In specific terms, this meant that Razzaq's support for the independence movement was never the simple, uncomplicated endorsement that political leaders prefer from their intellectual supporters. He supported independence because his structural analysis of the East Pakistan situation convinced him that no adequate form of Bengali political autonomy was achievable within the Pakistani state as it had developed, but this support was accompanied by an insistence

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on analysing honestly what independence would and would not solve, what structural problems it would resolve and what structural problems it would leave unaddressed or even intensify. This kind of conditional, analytically honest support is politically valuable in the long run, because it provides the movement with more realistic expectations and more adequate preparation for the post-independence challenges, but it is often unwelcome in the short run, because it complicates the simple narrative of struggle and liberation that political mobilisation requires.

CHAPTER THREE: THE DECADE OF RESISTANCE — RAZZAQ IN THE 1960s POLITICAL FERMENT

The Political Climate of the Ayub Decade

The decade of the 1960s was, for the Bengali intellectual class in East Pakistan, a period of intensifying political consciousness and escalating confrontation with the Pakistani state. Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, who had seized power through a military coup in October 1958, governed Pakistan through a period of what he called "Basic Democracies," a system of local government that purported to be democratic but that in fact concentrated power in the military and bureaucratic elite and denied the Bengali population the effective political representation that their demographic majority entitled them to. The "decade of development" that Ayub claimed for his regime produced significant macroeconomic growth, particularly in West Pakistan, but failed to address the structural inequalities between the two wings, and indeed intensified them in ways that were increasingly visible and increasingly resented.

For Razzaq, the Ayub regime represented precisely the kind of political system that his structural analysis had taught him to expect in post-colonial states where the conditions of genuine democratic governance had not been established: a state captured by a military and bureaucratic elite that used the rhetoric of development and national unity to legitimise the perpetuation of a system of power that served elite interests at the expense of the majority. The specific mechanisms of East-West economic exploitation that the Ayub development model employed, the extraction of foreign exchange earnings from jute exports while directing development investment to West Pakistan, the domination of the central civil service and military officer corps by West Pakistanis who used their institutional positions to direct resources to their own region, were visible to any analyst equipped with Razzaq's frameworks.

The political opposition to Ayub in East Pakistan was not, however, a monolithic movement. It included the Awami League under Mujib's increasingly assertive leadership, various left-wing parties and student organisations, religious political organisations, and a range of civil society voices including journalists, lawyers, academics, and cultural figures. These groups agreed on the need to resist Ayub's authoritarianism and to demand greater Bengali political autonomy, but they disagreed about the specific form that resistance should take and the specific goals it should pursue. Some sought provincial autonomy within a democratic Pakistan, some sought confederation, some were already privately committed to the goal of independence. Razzaq's position, in this period, was characteristically analytical rather than programmatic: he was

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interested in understanding what the structural conditions of the situation required rather than in committing in advance to any specific political formula.

The Attempt to Silence the Teacher

The impact of Razzaq's teaching on the political thinking of East Pakistani students and activists in the 1960s was apparently alarming enough to the Ayub regime to prompt an attempt to remove him from his teaching position. The attempt, documented in the Banglapedia entry on Razzaq and in the memoirs of his students, accused him of being "not mindful of his duties as a teacher," a vague charge that could be read, in context, as a reference to his intellectual engagement with the political crisis of East Pakistan rather than to any genuine professional dereliction. The attempt failed because, as the Banglapedia account notes, the government could not establish the charge in court, but the very fact of the attempt is historically significant in several ways.

First, it confirms that the Ayub regime understood Razzaq's influence on students and political activists as a serious political threat. A regime that had the full apparatus of state power at its disposal, that could and did imprison political opponents, ban political parties, control the press, and deploy military force against dissent, saw a university lecturer's teaching as threatening enough to attempt legal suppression. This is itself testimony to the power of intellectual influence when it is genuinely grounded in analytical understanding rather than merely ideological assertion. The regime could suppress political speeches and arrest political leaders, but it could not easily suppress the kind of analytical understanding that Razzaq was transmitting to his students, because that understanding equipped its possessors to see through the legitimising rhetoric of the regime in ways that simple emotional anti-government feeling did not.

Second, the failure of the attempt demonstrates the resilience of the institutional framework of the university, imperfect and constrained as it was under military governance, as a space for intellectual activity. The university, even in its compromised form under the Ayub regime, retained enough institutional independence to resist the most egregious forms of political interference with academic work, and the legal system, even in its constrained form, required at minimum that charges be capable of being established in court. Razzaq's survival of this attempt is a reminder that institutions matter, that even imperfect institutional protections are better than none, and that the dismantlement of institutional constraints on political power is the first step toward the kind of unchecked authoritarianism that genuine democratic governance must resist.

Third, the attempt reveals something important about Razzaq's specific mode of political influence. He was not being accused of making inflammatory political speeches or organising political parties or leading student protests. He was being accused of something more fundamental: of teaching in ways that shaped political consciousness. The regime's concern was not with his political actions but with his intellectual influence, which they correctly understood to be, in the long run, more dangerous to authoritarian governance than any specific political activity. A population that has been taught to understand the structural conditions of its political situation, to recognise domination when it sees it, to demand the conditions of genuine

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democratic self-governance, is a population that any authoritarian regime must fear more than one that merely resents its immediate grievances without understanding their systemic causes.

The Six Points and the Intellectual Preparation for Independence

The articulation of Mujib's Six Point Programme in February 1966 was a political event of enormous significance, and it is worth examining its relationship to Razzaq's intellectual framework in some detail. The Six Points were a specific political programme, addressed to a specific political situation, and they are best understood as such rather than as a purely theoretical document. But they also reflected a structural analysis of the East Pakistan situation that drew on the kind of political economic thinking that Razzaq had been developing in his teaching, and the intellectual coherence and analytical depth that distinguished them from mere political rhetoric owed something, at least, to the tradition of thought that Razzaq represented.

The first three points addressed the structure of the Pakistani federation. Point One called for a constitution based on a genuine federal structure with parliamentary government and direct elections on the basis of adult franchise. Point Two called for the federal government to have authority over only defence and foreign affairs, with all other subjects, including taxation and fiscal policy, falling under provincial jurisdiction. Point Three called for either two separate currencies for the two wings or one currency with constitutional safeguards against the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan.

The structural insight behind these three points is precisely the kind of structural political economic analysis that Razzaq's teaching exemplified. The problem was not merely that Ayub Khan was a bad leader or that his government was unrepresentative; the problem was structural, embedded in the constitutional and institutional arrangements that gave the military and the West Pakistani elite systematic advantages in the allocation of political power and economic resources. The solution, therefore, had to be structural: constitutional arrangements that would genuinely distribute power between the two wings, fiscal arrangements that would prevent the transfer of East Pakistan's economic resources to finance West Pakistan's development, monetary arrangements that would prevent the export of capital from the poorer to the richer wing.

Points Four, Five, and Six addressed related structural issues: the power of the provincial governments to tax and raise revenue, the right of the provinces to engage in foreign trade and have separate foreign exchange accounts, and the right of the provinces to maintain their own paramilitary forces for purposes of internal security. These points reflected the recognition that genuine provincial autonomy required not merely constitutional language but actual institutional and fiscal capacity, and that the specific mechanisms through which East Pakistan's resources were being extracted and transferred to West Pakistan had to be specifically addressed rather than merely deplored.

The intellectual coherence of the Six Points, their derivation from a structural analysis of the specific mechanisms of East Pakistan's subordination rather than from a simple assertion of Bengali grievance, was one of the reasons they proved so politically powerful. They gave the Bengali population not just an emotional articulation of their resentment but an analytical account of what the structural conditions of their situation required, translated into specific

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institutional and constitutional demands. This translation from structural analysis to specific institutional programme is exactly the kind of intellectual work that Razzaq's teaching trained its students to do, and the Six Points can be read, among other things, as evidence of what that training produced in its most politically gifted recipient.

The Mass Upsurge of 1969 and the Point of No Return

The mass upsurge of 1969, which forced Ayub Khan to resign and hand power over to the military commander Yahya Khan, was the moment when it became clear to most serious political observers, including Razzaq, that the structural crisis of East Pakistan had passed the point at which any accommodation within the Pakistani state could resolve it. The mass upsurge was not merely a political protest; it was a popular uprising that expressed the full depth of East Bengali resentment at Pakistani domination and that demonstrated the capacity of the Bengali population for collective political action on a scale that no Pakistani government could effectively repress.

Razzaq's analysis of the mass upsurge, as reconstructed from the accounts of students and political colleagues who had access to his thinking at the time, was characteristically both sympathetic and cautious. He understood the upsurge as the political expression of the structural grievances that he had been analysing for decades, and he had no doubt about either the legitimacy of those grievances or the justice of the political claims they were expressing. But he was also alert to the political dynamics of mass mobilisation, to the ways in which the emotional energy of popular uprising could be channelled toward outcomes that served the interests of political actors rather than the long-term interests of the population, and to the institutional challenges that the aftermath of successful mass mobilisation would inevitably create.

The specific concern that Razzaq expressed in conversations during this period, as several of his students have recounted, was about the role of the military in whatever political settlement emerged from the upsurge. Yahya Khan had replaced Ayub not as a democratic alternative but as another military commander who was prepared to make certain political concessions, including the holding of elections, in exchange for the preservation of the military's fundamental position in Pakistani political life. The question of what would happen if those elections produced an outcome that the military found politically unacceptable, specifically if they produced a Bengali majority that demanded the full implementation of autonomy or independence, was a question that Razzaq was already asking in 1969, more than a year before the 1970 elections produced exactly that outcome.

This prescience is one of the most impressive dimensions of Razzaq's intellectual achievement. He was not predicting the future through some mystical gift of foresight; he was reasoning from a structural analysis of the situation that allowed him to identify the structural pressures that were building and the structural constraints that would determine how those pressures were released. The structural analysis told him that the Pakistani military would not peacefully accept a political outcome that effectively ended its dominance of Pakistani political life, that the Bengali majority that was likely to emerge from free elections would demand exactly such an outcome, and that the confrontation between these two structural realities was likely to produce a crisis that could

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only be resolved through force. This was not a comfortable analysis, but it was an honest one, and its accuracy was confirmed by the events of March 1971.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE 1970 ELECTION AND THE STRUCTURAL LOGIC OF CONFRONTATION

An Election That Changed Everything

The general elections of December 1970 produced one of the most extraordinary electoral outcomes in South Asian political history. The Awami League, running on a platform that included the full implementation of the Six Points, won an absolute majority in the National Assembly of Pakistan, winning 160 of the 162 seats allocated to East Pakistan and giving it a majority in the 300-seat assembly as a whole. This was not merely a political victory for the Awami League; it was a structural transformation of Pakistani political reality. For the first time, the democratic process had produced an outcome that would, if respected, give effective political power to the Bengali majority and require the implementation of the political programme that the West Pakistani elite and the military had consistently refused to accept.

Razzaq's analysis of the election outcome, as expressed in conversations with students and colleagues in the weeks that followed, focused precisely on this structural dimension. The election had not merely changed the political balance of power; it had revealed the full extent of the structural contradiction at the heart of the Pakistani state. The military and the West Pakistani political elite had been willing to permit elections as long as they believed the elections could be managed to produce an outcome that preserved their dominance. The 1970 elections had demonstrated that this assumption was wrong: in a genuine popular election, the Bengali majority could and would express its political will, and that will was incompatible with the continued domination of Pakistan by the West Pakistani elite.

The question, as Razzaq formulated it in his seminars and conversations in the weeks after the election, was what would happen next. There were three structural possibilities. The first was that the Pakistani political and military elite would accept the election outcome, permit the Awami League to form a government and implement its programme, and thereby transform Pakistan into a genuinely democratic federation in which the Bengali majority would have effective political authority. This possibility, Razzaq analysed, was structurally very unlikely, because it required the Pakistani military to voluntarily surrender the political position that it had maintained since 1958 and that it understood as fundamental to its institutional interests.

The second structural possibility was a negotiated compromise in which the Awami League accepted modifications to its programme in exchange for a power-sharing arrangement that preserved enough of the military's political position to make a civilian government acceptable to it. This possibility was being actively pursued in the negotiations between Mujib, Bhutto, and Yahya Khan in the weeks after the election, and Razzaq followed these negotiations with close attention. His structural analysis was sceptical that a stable compromise was achievable, because the fundamental interests of the Bengali majority and the West Pakistani military establishment

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were genuinely incompatible rather than merely negotiable differences of preference, but he did not rule out the possibility that intelligent political leadership on all sides could find a formula that deferred the confrontation long enough to allow institutional arrangements to develop that might eventually resolve the structural contradiction more peacefully.

The third structural possibility was the one that Razzaq, his structural analysis suggested, considered most likely: that the military would refuse to accept the election outcome, use its control of the state apparatus to prevent the implementation of the democratic mandate, and trigger a confrontation that would ultimately resolve the structural contradiction through force. This was the possibility that the events of March 1971 confirmed.

The Intellectual and Moral Logic of Independence

It is important to understand what Razzaq's support for Bangladesh's independence was and what it was not. It was not, in the first instance, an expression of Bengali nationalism as an emotional commitment; Razzaq was too much the analytical thinker to be driven primarily by nationalist emotion, and too much the product of the Laskian democratic socialist tradition to be comfortable with the potentially exclusionary and illiberal dimensions of nationalism. His support for independence was, rather, the conclusion of a structural analysis of the specific political situation: the recognition that the specific conditions of the East Pakistan situation made it impossible for the Bengali population to achieve the conditions of genuine political self-governance within the Pakistani state.

The logic of this conclusion can be stated fairly precisely. Genuine political self-governance, in Razzaq's understanding, requires the capacity of a population to make collective decisions about their common good through institutions that they control and that are genuinely accountable to them. The Bengali population of East Pakistan was, as the structural analysis showed, systematically denied this capacity by the constitutional, economic, and military arrangements of the Pakistani state. The attempt to achieve Bengali autonomy through negotiation within the Pakistani state had failed repeatedly over two decades, and the 1970 election had demonstrated that even the democratic process could not produce an acceptable outcome without the willingness of the military to accept its results. Given this structural situation, the claim of the Bengali population to constitute a political community entitled to self-determination was, in Razzaq's view, both morally legitimate and structurally justified.

This argument drew on two distinct intellectual traditions that Razzaq had engaged with through his reading and teaching. The first was the liberal democratic tradition's principle of popular sovereignty, the idea that political authority derives from the consent of the governed and that a population that is systematically denied the capacity for self-governance has a legitimate claim to establish its own governing institutions. The second was the postcolonial tradition's critique of arbitrary boundaries and structural domination, the recognition that colonial and quasi-colonial arrangements that imposed political unity on culturally distinct populations were themselves a form of domination that the principle of self-determination entitled those populations to resist.

What Razzaq did not do, characteristically, was to present this argument in the simple nationalist terms that political mobilisation would have preferred. He did not argue that Bengalis were a

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superior people who deserved a state of their own by virtue of their cultural achievements, or that Pakistani Muslims were fundamentally different kinds of people from Bengali Muslims and therefore incapable of coexistence, or that the creation of Bangladesh would automatically solve the structural problems that the Bengali population faced. He argued, rather, that the structural conditions of the Pakistani state made genuine Bengali political self-governance impossible within it, and that therefore the creation of a separate state was necessary as a structural condition for the possibility of the kind of democratic self-governance that the Bengali population was entitled to pursue.

The distinction matters philosophically. The nationalist argument grounds the claim to independence in cultural identity and tends to produce, as its political corollary, an exclusive conception of national community in which ethnic or cultural minorities within the new state are potentially marginalised. The structural-democratic argument grounds the claim to independence in the conditions of democratic self-governance and tends to produce, as its political corollary, an inclusive conception of national community in which all who share the commitment to democratic self-governance are members of the political community regardless of their cultural or religious identity. Razzaq's argument for independence was of the second kind, and its implications for the character of the Bangladeshi state, including its treatment of its Hindu minority and its relationship to secular and religious conceptions of political community, were profound.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE NIGHT OF THE MASSACRE — MARCH 1971 AND THE TEST OF INTELLECTUAL COURAGE

The Events of 25 March 1971

The night of 25 March 1971 is one of the most terrible dates in the history of Bangladesh, and its significance for understanding Razzaq's life and thought cannot be overstated. On that night, the Pakistani military launched Operation Searchlight, a systematic military offensive against the Bengali population of East Pakistan that had been secretly planned over the preceding weeks while the political negotiations between Mujib, Bhutto, and Yahya Khan were proceeding in public. The operation targeted political leaders, students, academics, intellectuals, and Hindu Bengalis with particular intensity, and the Dhaka University campus was one of its primary targets.

The massacre at Dhaka University on the night of 25 March and the days that followed was one of the most concentrated acts of political violence against an intellectual community in the twentieth century. Pakistani soldiers systematically killed students in their dormitories and faculty members in their homes, targeting specifically those who had been identified, through surveillance and intelligence work, as prominent figures in the Bengali political and intellectual movement. The Jagannath Hall, the dormitory predominantly housing Hindu students, was particularly savagely attacked. Faculty members were taken from their homes and shot. The sense of safety that the university campus had previously offered, imperfect as it was, was destroyed completely.

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Razzaq was on the campus that night. As an individual who had been identified by the Pakistani authorities as politically suspect, who had been targeted by the Ayub regime's attempt to remove him from his position, and who was known to have close relationships with the Awami League political leadership, he was a natural target for the military operation. The specific account of his escape, as preserved in multiple independent sources including the Banglapedia entry and the accounts of his students, is both harrowing and characteristic. Pakistani soldiers came to arrest him at his home on the campus. They kicked at his door. Alerted by the sound, Razzaq escaped out the back of his house into the darkness of the campus, where he was able to elude the soldiers and eventually reach safety.

The image of this elderly intellectual, who had spent his life in the peaceful pursuit of knowledge and in the quiet but powerful work of teaching, escaping through the back of his house from soldiers who had come to arrest him, is one of the most vivid and emotionally powerful in the entire narrative of his life. It captures, in a single concrete moment, the reality that ideas have consequences, that intellectual work is not a merely private or academic activity but a form of political engagement that can attract the most extreme forms of political suppression, and that intellectual courage is not merely a matter of saying uncomfortable things in seminars but sometimes of literally running for one's life.

The Trial in Absentia

The Pakistani military regime did not simply fail to arrest Razzaq on the night of 25 March and then forget about him. It pursued the matter through the formal apparatus of military justice, as grotesque as the application of that term is to a kangaroo court operating in the context of a military occupation conducting a campaign of mass murder. Razzaq was tried in absentia by a Pakistani military court and sentenced to fourteen years of rigorous imprisonment on charges of treasonable conduct in support of the independence movement.

The specific charges against him, to the extent that they can be reconstructed from available sources, related to his political associations, his intellectual influence on students and political leaders who had participated in the independence movement, and his known opposition to Pakistani centralisation and his support for Bengali political autonomy. The military court's characterisation of these activities as treasonable is, of course, the characterisation of a regime that had already committed crimes against humanity against the population whose political representatives had legitimately won a democratic election. The moral authority of the court was nil.

But the fourteen-year sentence is worth reflecting on for a moment, not as a legal matter but as a political and intellectual one. What exactly was the Pakistani military regime convicting Razzaq of? It was convicting him of thinking and teaching, of having ideas about Bengali political identity and self-determination and sharing those ideas with his students and interlocutors over decades of teaching and conversation. The sentence was an acknowledgment, couched in the language of criminal law, of the power of ideas: of the recognition by those in power that the kind of analytical understanding of structural domination that Razzaq had been transmitting to his students was more genuinely threatening to their authority than any bomb or armed unit could be.

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Razzaq survived the war in hiding, staying in his village home in the rural area outside Dhaka, enduring the months of military occupation and mass atrocity that would eventually end with the Indian military intervention and the Pakistani surrender of 16 December 1971. The specific conditions of his hiding, the anxieties of that period, the personal experience of living as a fugitive from a military regime that had sentenced him in absentia to fourteen years in prison, are not well-documented in the available sources, perhaps because Razzaq himself was characteristically reluctant to speak about his personal experiences in terms that would draw attention to his own suffering at the expense of attending to the structural and political dimensions of what he had lived through.

The Moral Witness of the Intellectual

The experience of March 1971 and its aftermath had a profound effect on Razzaq's subsequent thinking and on his understanding of what the intellectual's relationship to political power and political violence requires. This effect is not directly documented in his own words, since he was, as always, reluctant to speak about his personal experiences and reactions in the first person. But it is reconstructable from the testimony of students who engaged with him in the post-independence period and from the intellectual preoccupations that characterise his thinking and teaching after 1971.

The most important effect was a deepening of his conviction about the precariousness of the intellectual's position in societies where the conditions of genuine democratic governance had not been established. The events of 1971 had demonstrated, in the most concrete possible terms, that the guarantee of intellectual freedom depended on political conditions, that the capacity to think and teach and speak freely was not a natural condition but a political achievement that required institutional protection and democratic political culture, and that when those conditions were absent, intellectual activity attracted exactly the kind of political violence that March 1971 had exemplified.

This conviction deepened his commitment to the project of democratic state-building as not merely a political good but as a prerequisite of intellectual life itself. The creation of a democratic Bangladesh was not, from this perspective, merely a matter of giving the Bengali people the political institutions they deserved after decades of Pakistani domination; it was also the creation of the political conditions under which intellectual life, the life of free inquiry and open debate and genuine education, could be pursued without the constant shadow of state violence. The connection between democratic governance and intellectual freedom was, in Razzaq's experience of 1971, not an abstract philosophical proposition but a lived political reality.

CHAPTER SIX: THE INTELLECTUAL ARCHITECTURE OF LIBERATION — WHAT RAZZAQ'S PHILOSOPHY CONTRIBUTED TO THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

Ideas as Political Force

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The question of how intellectual ideas contribute to political movements is one of the most complex and contested questions in the history of ideas. At one extreme, the view that ideas are merely epiphenomenal, that they merely articulate and rationalise political interests and power dynamics that have their real sources in material conditions, reduces intellectual work to a kind of elaborate rationalization and denies it any independent causal role in political history. At the other extreme, the view that ideas alone drive history, that political events are simply the consequences of intellectual developments, ignores the material, institutional, and contingent dimensions of political processes in ways that historical analysis consistently refutes.

The relationship between Razzaq's intellectual contributions and the Bangladesh liberation movement offers an instructive case study in the more nuanced understanding of how ideas actually function in political history. Razzaq's ideas did not cause the liberation movement in any simple causal sense; the structural conditions of East Pakistani domination, the economic exploitation of the eastern wing, the cultural subordination of the Bengali population, the democratic denial of the 1970 election results, these were the immediate causes of the liberation struggle, and they would have produced some form of political resistance even without Razzaq's intellectual contribution. What Razzaq's ideas did was to give the liberation movement an intellectual architecture, a set of analytical frameworks and normative commitments that shaped the specific form the movement took, the specific character of the political vision it articulated, and the specific institutional arrangements it sought to create.

This distinction between causing a movement and giving it intellectual architecture is important. The architecture that ideas provide to a political movement is not merely decorative; it shapes the movement's goals, its methods, its understanding of what constitutes success and what constitutes failure, its treatment of minority communities and dissenting voices, and its relationship to the post-movement challenges of governing the state it has created. The intellectual architecture of the Bangladesh liberation movement, shaped significantly though not exclusively by Razzaq's teaching and the tradition it represented, gave the movement some of its most important characteristics.

The Democratic Inclusivity of the Movement's Intellectual Vision

The most important characteristic that Razzaq's intellectual contribution gave to the liberation movement was its democratic inclusivity. The movement for Bengali independence, as conceived in its most intellectually serious formulations, was not a movement for the creation of a Muslim Bengali state in the manner in which Pakistan had been conceived as a Muslim state; it was a movement for the creation of a Bengali state that would be democratic and secular in the sense of treating all of its citizens, regardless of religion, as equal members of the political community. This was a crucial distinction with enormous practical implications.

The Hindu minority of East Bengal, which had experienced enormous displacement and violence in the 1947 partition and which was subsequently subjected to systematic pressure and periodic persecution by the Pakistani state through discriminatory legislation and economic measures, was a natural constituency for the liberation movement. But the movement's ability to include them as full members rather than merely as convenient allies depended on its articulation of a political vision grounded in Bengali cultural identity rather than Muslim religious identity, a

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vision in which Hindus and Muslims were equally Bengali and equally entitled to the full membership of the political community.

Razzaq's contribution to this dimension of the movement's intellectual vision was fundamental. His consistent insistence that Bengali cultural identity, constituted by language, history, and shared ecological and cultural experience, was the authentic basis of political community rather than religious allegiance, provided the intellectual foundation for the movement's democratic inclusivity. His critique of the two-nation theory's reduction of political identity to religious categories, developed over decades of teaching and conversation, equipped the movement's intellectual supporters with the analytical tools to articulate a conception of Bengali political community that could include Hindus and Muslims as equal members.

The constitutional expression of this vision in the 1972 constitution of Bangladesh, with its four foundational principles of nationalism (Bengali cultural nationalism rather than religious nationalism), socialism, democracy, and secularism, reflects directly the intellectual tradition that Razzaq represented. The specific formulation of these principles, particularly the combination of Bengali nationalism with secularism and democracy, was not the inevitable or automatic outcome of the liberation struggle; it was the result of specific intellectual choices about what kind of state Bangladesh should be, and those choices were shaped by the intellectual frameworks that the movement's leadership had absorbed through their engagement with Razzaq's teaching and the tradition of thought he represented.

The Economic Programme of the Liberation Movement

The liberation movement's economic vision was also shaped, significantly though not exclusively, by the intellectual tradition that Razzaq represented. The Six Points, which served as the economic programme of the Awami League in the 1970 elections and which reflected the structural economic analysis that Razzaq's teaching had developed, pointed toward a conception of post-independence Bangladesh as a state that would exercise genuine economic sovereignty, that would control its own fiscal and monetary policy, that would develop its economy in ways that served the interests of its own population rather than the interests of an external elite.

The specific economic challenges of post-independence Bangladesh, and the specific policy responses that the liberation movement's economic vision suggested, were further developed in Razzaq's 1980 lecture on Bangladesh: State of the Nation, which Part Two of this textbook examined in detail. But the intellectual framework for that lecture, the ecological economic analysis of the specific conditions of the Bengal delta, the insistence on development strategies that work with rather than against the specific geographic and ecological conditions of the territory, the recognition of the delta's specific assets including its rivers, its land, its uniquely positioned geography, and its people, was already present in the intellectual tradition that Razzaq had been developing through his teaching in the preceding decades.

The post-independence period would demonstrate the enormous difficulty of translating this economic vision into practice in conditions of extreme poverty, institutional weakness, physical destruction from the liberation war, and the complex political dynamics of a new state trying to assert its sovereignty while managing the competing claims of different domestic constituencies

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and external powers. But the intellectual framework for addressing these challenges, the analytical tools for understanding the structural conditions of Bangladesh's development and the structural obstacles to it, was one of the most valuable contributions that the intellectual tradition Razzaq represented made to the new state.

The Constitutional Vision of Democratic Governance

The third major dimension of Razzaq's intellectual contribution to the liberation movement was his constitutional vision of democratic governance. This vision, developed through his engagement with Laski's democratic theory and his own analysis of the structural conditions of democratic governance in post-colonial societies, provided the intellectual framework for thinking about what kind of state Bangladesh needed to create and what institutional arrangements it needed to establish in order to make genuine democratic self-governance possible.

The central elements of this constitutional vision included, first, a genuine parliamentary democracy with a directly elected legislature as the primary locus of political authority and an executive accountable to that legislature. This was the Westminster model that Razzaq, following Laski, had consistently advocated as the most suitable institutional form for a newly independent democratic state, because it provided clear lines of political accountability and institutional mechanisms for changing governments peacefully through electoral competition. The 1972 constitution of Bangladesh adopted this model, and the specific institutional arrangements it embodied, including the parliamentary system with the Prime Minister as head of government accountable to the legislature, reflected directly the constitutional preferences that the intellectual tradition Razzaq represented had consistently expressed.

The second element was the rule of law as a genuine constraint on political power. Razzaq's consistent insistence that political authority must operate within legal limits, that no political actor, however popular or however important their contribution to the independence movement, should be above the law, was both a constitutional principle and a warning about the specific risks that the post-independence political culture would face. The temptation to allow the charisma of the liberation struggle's leaders to substitute for the institutional constraints of constitutional governance was a temptation that Razzaq's structural analysis identified as one of the most dangerous threats to the democratic character of the new state.

The third element was the protection of fundamental rights, including the rights of minority communities, as a constitutional guarantee rather than merely a political commitment. Razzaq's inclusive conception of Bengali political community required constitutional protection for the rights of Hindu and other minority communities, not just as a matter of political prudence but as a matter of democratic principle. A democracy that fails to protect the rights of its minorities is not a genuine democracy but a form of majority rule that denies the equal political standing of those who do not belong to the majority community.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE INTELLECTUAL IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE

The Inner Life of Political Commitment

One of the dimensions of Razzaq's engagement with the liberation movement that is least documented in the available sources but most important for a complete understanding of his intellectual biography is the psychological dimension: the inner experience of a man who was, by temperament and conviction, a thinker rather than an activist, and who found himself, in the crisis of 1971, inescapably implicated in one of the most violent and consequential political events of the twentieth century. The psychology of the intellectual in the liberation struggle is not a merely personal matter; it illuminates important truths about the relationship between intellectual life and political commitment that have general significance for understanding how thinkers engage with the political crises of their time.

The specific psychological challenge that 1971 posed for Razzaq was the challenge of maintaining intellectual integrity in conditions of political extremity. The liberation struggle was a situation that made simple, unconditional commitments morally compelling and practically necessary: people were being killed, a population was suffering violent oppression, the cause of Bengali self-determination was a just cause that required active support. The intellectual who in this situation paused to qualify his commitments, to acknowledge the complexity of the situation, to raise questions about the post-independence challenges that the movement's leadership might find inconvenient, risked being seen as a collaborator in injustice through his failure of unconditional commitment.

But the intellectual who abandoned his commitment to honest analysis in favour of the unconditional commitment that political mobilisation preferred would be betraying not just his own intellectual standards but the very thing that made his contribution to the liberation movement valuable. Razzaq's value to the movement was not as another voice in the chorus of unconditional nationalism; it was as the analytical intelligence that could identify the structural conditions and structural challenges that the movement needed to understand in order to build a genuinely democratic and sustainable post-independence state. Surrendering that analytical function would have meant abandoning the most important contribution he could make.

The resolution of this psychological challenge, to the extent that it was resolved, lay in what might be called the concept of committed analytical intelligence: the recognition that intellectual honesty and political commitment are not opposites but complements, that the most valuable service an intellectual can render to a just political cause is to help it understand the conditions of its success and the challenges of its aftermath with the full rigour of honest analysis, rather than the comforting but ultimately harmful service of unconditional endorsement. This resolution was not comfortable or easy, and it generated tensions with some of the political actors around Razzaq who would have preferred simpler and more unconditional expressions of support. But it was, in the long run, the intellectually honest and politically more valuable position.

The Trauma of Witnessing

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The events of March 1971 were not merely politically significant for Razzaq; they were personally traumatic in ways that any honest engagement with his biography must acknowledge. He witnessed the beginning of the massacre at Dhaka University, was himself targeted for arrest by soldiers who came to his home, and escaped by the narrowest of margins. He then spent the better part of a year in hiding, separated from his institutional life at the university, cut off from most of his normal intellectual activities and social connections, and living with the constant awareness that the state whose authority he had been subjected to for his entire professional career was actively seeking to imprison him for fourteen years.

The psychological effects of these experiences on a man of sixty years of age, whose entire life had been devoted to the peaceful pursuit of knowledge and the intellectual formation of students, cannot be dismissed as merely biographical background. They were experiences that tested, in the most extreme possible way, the convictions that his intellectual formation had produced, and they produced in him a deepened understanding of the relationship between ideas, institutions, and power that his subsequent teaching reflected.

The specific things he appears to have taken from this experience, as reconstructed from the testimony of students who engaged with him in the post-independence period, include a deepened conviction about the fragility of intellectual freedom and the importance of the institutional conditions that sustain it, a more acute awareness of the human costs of political violence and the moral urgency of preventing its recurrence, and a more explicit recognition that the structural analysis he had been developing across decades of teaching was not merely academic but practically relevant to the survival of intellectual life itself.

These deepened convictions expressed themselves in his post-independence teaching and conversation through a more explicit engagement with the institutional conditions of democratic governance and a more urgent insistence on the importance of building those conditions in the new Bangladeshi state. The experience of living under a state that had used its apparatus of law and military force to suppress intellectual activity and political dissent gave him a visceral understanding of what the failure of democratic governance actually means in human terms that his earlier, more academic engagement with these questions had not fully provided.

CHAPTER EIGHT: INDEPENDENCE AND RECOGNITION — NATIONAL PROFESSOR AND THE QUESTION OF HONOUR

The Meaning of the National Professorship

Bangladesh declared independence on 26 March 1971 and achieved it fully through the Pakistani surrender on 16 December 1971. The period of reconstruction and state-building that followed was, as Razzaq had anticipated, one of extraordinary difficulty. The liberation war had produced enormous physical destruction, massive displacement of population, the loss of a significant portion of the educated and professional class to the horrific campaign of targeted killings that the Pakistani military had conducted, and the trauma of mass violence that would take decades to process.

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In 1975, the government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman honoured Razzaq with the distinction of National Professor, one of the first to receive this designation in the history of Bangladesh. The honour was both an acknowledgment of Razzaq's extraordinary intellectual contribution to Bangladeshi cultural and intellectual life and a specific recognition of his role in the liberation movement, including his survival of the March massacre and his trial in absentia by the Pakistani military. The designation carried a monthly stipend and a public recognition of intellectual service to the nation that placed Razzaq in the very highest tier of Bangladesh's intellectual honour system.

The National Professorship requires careful analysis as a political and cultural event, not because there is any reason to doubt the sincerity of the honour or its appropriateness to Razzaq's achievement, but because the political context in which it was awarded was itself complex and potentially revealing. By 1975, the Mujib government was under severe political pressure from multiple directions: economic crisis, political violence, institutional breakdown, and growing authoritarian tendencies that would culminate in the BAKSAL system and the effective one-party state of 1975. The honouring of Razzaq, a man whose intellectual convictions included a deep commitment to democratic pluralism and whose warnings about the dangers of authoritarian drift had been consistent and specific, in this political context, raises questions about the relationship between intellectual recognition and political legitimation.

The most charitable interpretation of the timing, and the one that seems most consistent with the available evidence, is that the honour reflected Mujib's genuine personal respect for Razzaq, his acknowledgment of the intellectual debt that his political career owed to Razzaq's teaching, and his desire to recognise this publicly at a moment when the political difficulties he was facing made the validation of intellectual and cultural authority particularly important. The less charitable interpretation is that the honour was partly an attempt to associate the government's intellectual legitimacy with the most respected intellectual figure in Bangladesh's public life at a moment when that legitimacy was under challenge.

Razzaq's own response to the honour, as far as it can be reconstructed, was characteristic: he accepted it with gratitude and continued to maintain his intellectual independence and to express his views with the honesty that his convictions required. He did not use the honour as an occasion for expressions of loyalty to the government that had awarded it, and he did not modify his intellectual positions to reflect the political preferences of that government. The National Professorship was, for Razzaq, recognition of a life's work rather than an obligation to intellectual deference, and he treated it accordingly.

The Honorary Doctorate from Delhi

The 1973 honorary doctorate from the University of Delhi, awarded in the period between Bangladesh's independence and the National Professorship, represents a different kind of recognition and one that has its own political and intellectual significance. The University of Delhi is one of India's most distinguished academic institutions, and an honorary doctorate from it is a recognition of intellectual achievement that has a different character from state recognition: it is the judgment of a peer institution rather than a political authority, and it is

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therefore less susceptible to the interpretations of political legitimation that complicate the reading of the National Professorship.

The specific grounds on which Delhi honoured Razzaq are not fully documented in the available sources, but the circumstantial evidence suggests that the honour reflected recognition both of his intellectual contributions to political science and to the study of South Asian politics specifically, and of his personal courage during the liberation struggle. The timing, in 1973, the year after Bangladesh's establishment of diplomatic relations with India and the period of closest friendship between the two countries in the immediate post-independence period, is significant but does not reduce the honour to a merely political gesture; the University of Delhi's academic committee would have made the award on intellectual grounds even if the diplomatic context provided an additional impetus for the timing.

The Delhi doctorate is also significant as evidence of the regional and indeed South Asian dimensions of Razzaq's intellectual reputation. He was not merely a figure of local or national importance; he was recognised by one of the subcontinent's most distinguished academic institutions as an intellectual of regional significance whose contribution to the understanding of South Asian politics and history deserved formal academic recognition. This regional recognition is consistent with the scope of his intellectual project, which was always concerned with the whole of Bengal's historical experience and with the broader dynamics of South Asian political development, and not merely with the specific political questions of the Bangladeshi state.

CHAPTER NINE: RAZZAQ'S ANALYSIS OF WHY PAKISTAN FAILED — A PHILOSOPHICAL POST-MORTEM

The Structural Diagnosis of Pakistani Failure

One of the most important intellectual contributions that Razzaq made in the post-independence period was his sustained analysis of why the Pakistani political project had failed: why the state created in 1947 on the basis of Muslim political solidarity had broken apart within twenty-four years, producing first the liberation war of 1971 and then the permanent separation of its two wings. This analysis was not merely of historical interest; it was directly relevant to the questions of state-building that independent Bangladesh was confronting, because many of the structural conditions that had contributed to Pakistani failure were also present in the new Bangladeshi state.

The structural analysis of Pakistani failure that Razzaq developed drew on the same frameworks that his thesis on political parties had established and that his subsequent decades of teaching had refined and extended. The analysis identified four principal structural causes of Pakistani failure, each connected to the others and together constituting a diagnosis of a specific political pathology that post-colonial states are particularly vulnerable to.

The first structural cause was the dominance of the state apparatus, specifically the military and the bureaucracy, over the processes of political representation and democratic governance.

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Pakistan had inherited from British colonialism a state structure that was designed for administration and control rather than for democratic governance, a bureaucratic and military apparatus that was powerful, institutionally coherent, and capable of operating independently of civilian political authority. The failure to subject this apparatus to effective democratic accountability and civilian control from the earliest years of independence had allowed it to develop a corporate self-interest that eventually overrode the constitutional framework and produced the series of military coups that characterised Pakistani political history.

Razzaq's analysis of this structural cause was particularly penetrating because he connected it directly to the specific dynamics of communal political mobilisation that had created the Pakistani state. The Muslim League, the political movement that had created Pakistan, had mobilised Muslim political consciousness on the basis of religious identity rather than building the broad-based democratic institutions that would have been necessary to subject the military and bureaucratic apparatus to effective civilian control. The result was a state that had the apparatus of governance but lacked the democratic institutions that would have made that apparatus genuinely accountable to the population it was supposed to serve.

The second structural cause was the failure of economic development to address the structural inequalities between the two wings. The specific mechanisms of this failure, the transfer of East Pakistan's export earnings to finance West Pakistan's industrialisation, the discriminatory allocation of development funds, the domination of the business elite by West Pakistani families, had been analysed in the Six Points and in the broader body of Bengali economic criticism of Pakistani development policy. But Razzaq's analysis went deeper than the specific mechanisms of resource transfer to identify the underlying structural condition that made such transfers politically possible: the absence of effective institutional mechanisms through which the Bengali population could hold the central government accountable for its economic policies.

This was, again, a failure of democratic institutions rather than merely a failure of economic policy. If Pakistan had had genuinely functioning parliamentary institutions in which the Bengali majority could exercise effective influence over central government policy, the specific economic policies that transferred resources from East to West would have been politically impossible to sustain. The fact that they were sustained for two decades reflects the failure of democratic institutions to function effectively, which in turn reflects the failure to build the broad-based political organisations and civic culture that genuine democratic governance requires.

The third structural cause was the cultural and linguistic policy of the Pakistani state, which attempted to impose Urdu as the sole national language in a state where the majority of the population spoke Bengali. This policy was not merely a mistake of political management; it was a structural feature of a state that had been conceived in terms of a religious community rather than a civic political community, and that therefore lacked the institutional framework for managing the cultural diversity of its population in a genuinely democratic way. A genuinely democratic state must be able to accommodate the cultural diversity of its citizens, including their linguistic diversity, within a framework of equal citizenship, and the Pakistani state's failure to do this reflected the deeper structural failure of its political foundation.

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The fourth structural cause was what Razzaq characterised, in his conversations and teaching, as the failure of political leadership to develop the kind of broad-based, institutionally rooted political organisations that genuine democratic governance requires. The Muslim League had been, as his thesis on political parties had argued, an elite organisation that had mobilised mass support on the basis of a single political objective, the creation of Pakistan, without developing the organisational depth, the ideological pluralism, or the institutional rootedness that would have been necessary to sustain genuine democratic politics in the post-independence period. The result was that after partition, when the unifying objective of creating Pakistan had been achieved, the League rapidly disintegrated as a coherent political force, leaving a political vacuum that the military and bureaucracy were able to fill.

The Implications for Bangladesh

The analysis of Pakistani failure had direct and urgent implications for the challenges facing the newly independent Bangladesh. Most of the structural conditions that had contributed to Pakistani failure were also present, in greater or lesser degree, in Bangladesh: a state apparatus inherited from colonial administration and not yet subjected to effective democratic accountability, a political organisation, the Awami League, that had mobilised mass support on the basis of the liberation struggle rather than building the institutional depth necessary for sustained democratic governance, cultural and linguistic homogeneity that eliminated one dimension of the Pakistani problem but left others, and the economic challenges of an extremely poor and underdeveloped society trying to build the conditions of democratic governance from a very limited base.

Razzaq's analysis of these conditions was not pessimistic in any simple sense; he was not arguing that Bangladesh was fated to repeat Pakistan's failures. He was arguing that the specific structural conditions of the situation created specific structural risks that needed to be consciously and deliberately addressed through specific institutional choices and development policies. The avoidance of Pakistani-style failure was not guaranteed by the fact that Bangladesh was not Pakistan; it required active political choices to build the institutions that Pakistan had failed to build and to avoid the specific institutional dynamics that had been Pakistan's undoing.

This analysis had specific implications for three areas of policy: the control of the military, the development of political parties as genuine democratic institutions rather than vehicles for personal or factional political power, and the building of civil society institutions, including free media, independent judiciary, and effective educational system, that are prerequisites of genuine democratic governance. In each of these areas, Razzaq's structural analysis pointed to specific risks that the post-independence political situation was generating and specific institutional responses that would be necessary to manage those risks.

The subsequent history of Bangladesh, with its pattern of military coups, authoritarian governance, and institutional underdevelopment, confirmed the accuracy of his diagnosis in ways that were deeply painful for those who had absorbed his analysis and understood what it meant. The military coups of 1975, 1982, and the subsequent periods of military-backed governance represented precisely the structural failure that Razzaq's analysis had identified as the primary risk: the capture of the state apparatus by the military at the expense of civilian

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democratic institutions, in conditions where those institutions had not been sufficiently developed and consolidated to resist such capture.

CHAPTER TEN: THE QUESTION OF BENGALI MUSLIM IDENTITY REVISITED — RAZZAQ AND THE FOUNDATION OF A NATIONAL CULTURE

The Cultural Dimension of Political Independence

The achievement of political independence in 1971 did not resolve, and indeed in some respects intensified, the fundamental question of Bengali Muslim identity that had been at the centre of the Muslim Bengali intellectual dilemma for most of the twentieth century. What did it mean to be a Bengali Muslim in an independent Bangladesh? What was the relationship between the Islamic dimension of Bengali Muslim identity and the specifically Bengali cultural dimension? What role should Islam play in the political life of the new state? These questions had been asked before 1971, but the creation of an independent state gave them a new urgency and a new political context because the answers now had direct institutional implications: they would determine the character of the constitutional order, the content of the educational system, the legal framework governing family and personal law, and the broader cultural orientation of the new state.

Razzaq's contribution to these questions was made primarily through his teaching and conversations in the post-independence period, and it drew on the framework of analysis that he had developed across decades of engagement with Bengali history and culture. The key element of his analysis, the element that distinguished it from both the secular nationalist position and the Islamic political position, was its insistence on the specific historical formation of Bengali Muslim identity as something that was irreducible to either of these frameworks.

Bengali Muslim identity, as Razzaq understood it, was not simply the identity of Muslims who happened to live in Bengal and speak Bengali. It was the identity of a specific community formed through the specific historical process of Islam's encounter with the specific cultural, ecological, and social conditions of the Bengal delta over more than five centuries. This encounter had produced a form of Islamic practice and a form of Bengali cultural life that were deeply interpenetrated, that had shaped each other in ways that were not easily separable, and that constituted a distinctive cultural tradition with its own specific character and its own specific resources.

The distinctive character of Bengali Islamic practice, with its Sufi influences, its syncretic engagement with pre-Islamic Bengali cultural traditions, its emphasis on devotional practice over legalistic formulation, its integration of aesthetic and musical dimensions that pure Salafi orthodoxy would reject, represented for Razzaq one of the most valuable and most vulnerable dimensions of Bengali cultural heritage. It was valuable because it represented a genuinely pluralistic and humanistic form of Islamic practice that had sustained peaceful coexistence between Bengali Hindus and Muslims across many centuries of shared life in the delta. It was vulnerable because it was increasingly challenged, from the mid-twentieth century onward, by

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waves of Islamic reformism that sought to purify Bengali Islam of its syncretic elements and bring it into conformity with a more austere and doctrinally stricter version of Islamic practice.

The Challenge of Islamic Reformism

The challenge of Islamic reformism to the specific cultural tradition of Bengali Islam was, for Razzaq, not merely a religious question but a political one. The reformist movements that sought to eliminate the syncretic and devotional elements of Bengali Islamic practice and replace them with a more orthodox and doctrinally uniform version of Islam were not operating in a cultural vacuum; they were connected to broader political movements that sought to define Bengali Muslim identity in terms of Islamic allegiance rather than Bengali cultural heritage, and that therefore had implications for the character of the political community that an independent Bangladesh would constitute.

If the Bengali Muslim identity was defined primarily in terms of Islamic allegiance, then the political community of Bangladesh would be constituted primarily on the basis of that allegiance, and the Hindu minority and other non-Muslim communities would be, by definition, marginal to that political community. The constitutional expression of this conception of political community would be an Islamic state in which non-Muslims were second-class citizens rather than full members of the political community. This was exactly the kind of political exclusion that Razzaq's democratic theory and his inclusive conception of Bengali political community ruled out.

The alternative, which Razzaq's analysis consistently pointed toward, was a conception of Bengali Muslim identity that acknowledged the Islamic dimension without allowing it to define the totality of political community. Bengali Muslims were Muslims, and their Islamic identity was a genuine and important dimension of who they were; Razzaq had no interest in dismissing or minimising that identity. But they were also Bengali, with a specifically Bengali cultural heritage, a Bengali language, a Bengali aesthetic sensibility, a Bengali relationship to the specific landscape and ecology of the delta, and a Bengali history of interaction with other communities, that was equally real and equally important. The political community of Bangladesh could be constituted on the basis of this comprehensive Bengali identity, which included both the Islamic and the specifically Bengali dimensions, rather than on the basis of Islamic allegiance alone.

This position was and remains controversial, and its controversial character reflects the genuine tension between the Islamic and the Bengali dimensions of Bengali Muslim identity that Razzaq was analysing. The tension cannot be simply resolved by intellectual argument; it is a tension that the Bengali Muslim community lives with and negotiates in its individual and collective life, and that any honest intellectual engagement with Bengali Muslim identity must acknowledge rather than deny.

What Razzaq's analysis provided was not a resolution of this tension but a framework for living with it without allowing it to be politically exploited in ways that damaged the democratic character of the Bangladeshi state. By insisting on the historical specificity of Bengali Muslim identity, on its formation through the specific encounter of Islam and Bengali culture over many centuries, and on the diversity and richness of what that encounter had produced, he was

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providing an intellectual foundation for a form of Bengali Muslim political identity that could sustain democratic inclusivity without requiring the suppression of Islamic practice or the denial of Islamic heritage.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE POSTCOLONIAL INTELLECTUAL AND THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT — COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Razzaq in the Tradition of the Postcolonial Intellectual

To understand the full significance of Razzaq's role in the Bangladesh liberation movement, it is helpful to place him in the broader tradition of the postcolonial intellectual who contributes to a liberation movement through intellectual rather than directly political activity. This is a tradition with distinguished representatives across the world in the twentieth century, and the comparison illuminates both what was distinctive about Razzaq's contribution and what he shared with other figures who occupied similar positions in other liberation contexts.

The most obvious comparison is with Aimé Césaire, the Martinican poet and politician whose concept of negritude provided a fundamental intellectual framework for anti-colonial movements across the African and Caribbean world. Césaire's contribution to the decolonisation movement was not primarily organisational or military; it was intellectual and cultural, the articulation of a positive conception of African and African-descended identity that challenged the colonial narrative of African inferiority and provided the intellectual foundation for claims of political dignity and self-determination. The parallels with Razzaq are instructive: both were intellectuals whose contribution to liberation was made through the medium of ideas rather than direct political action, both were concerned with the cultural dimensions of political identity and the relationship between cultural self-understanding and political self-determination, and both operated within an academic and institutional context that gave their intellectual work a certain authority and reach that purely political activity would not have had.

The comparison with Frantz Fanon, the Martinican psychiatrist and political theorist who became one of the most important intellectual figures of the Algerian liberation struggle, is equally instructive. Fanon's contribution to the liberation struggle was, like Razzaq's, primarily intellectual: the analysis of the psychological dimensions of colonial domination, the articulation of what genuine decolonisation requires at the level of consciousness and culture rather than merely at the level of political institutions, and the exploration of the contradictions and challenges of post-colonial nation-building. The parallel with Razzaq is not in the content of their analyses, which were quite different in their specific frameworks and concerns, but in the structural position they occupied: the intellectual who brings analytical depth to a political movement, who is valued for the quality of thought rather than the quantity of political action, and whose contribution is most visible in the intellectual character of the movement rather than in its organisational or military dimensions.

A more proximate comparison, and one that is particularly illuminating for understanding Razzaq's specific position, is with the Indian intellectual tradition of what has been called the

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"nationalist intellectual," the figure who combines academic distinction with political commitment and whose intellectual work is oriented toward understanding and addressing the specific conditions of the colonial or post-colonial situation. Figures like B.R. Ambedkar, who combined legal scholarship with political leadership of the Dalit liberation movement, and Jawaharlal Nehru, who combined the experience of governance with a sustained intellectual engagement with Indian history, culture, and the conditions of democratic modernity, represent this tradition in its most distinguished forms. Razzaq, while different from both in important ways, belongs in the same broad tradition of the intellectual who takes the specific conditions of the colonial and post-colonial situation as the primary object of serious analytical attention.

The Distinctiveness of the Oral Intellectual

What most distinguishes Razzaq from most of the figures in this tradition is, of course, the unusual relationship between his intellectual contribution and the written word. Césaire, Fanon, Ambedkar, and Nehru were all prolific writers whose ideas are preserved in extensive published works that can be analysed, cited, and debated in the normal ways of intellectual discourse. Razzaq, as Parts One and Two of this textbook have extensively discussed, left almost no written record of his thought, preferring the oral medium of teaching and conversation to the written medium of publication.

This preference was not simply a personal eccentricity; it reflected a specific understanding of how intellectual life works and what genuine intellectual transmission requires. Razzaq believed, as his Socratic comparison suggests, that ideas are most effectively transmitted not through the fixed medium of written texts but through the living exchange of minds in conversation and dialogue. The written text fixes a thought at a particular moment and in a particular formulation; the oral conversation allows thought to develop and respond to the specific concerns and confusions of specific interlocutors in ways that the written text cannot.

This preference for the oral medium had significant consequences for the specific character of Razzaq's contribution to the liberation movement. Unlike the contributions of intellectual figures who work through published texts, which can be distributed, read, translated, and debated by audiences that never encountered the author personally, Razzaq's contribution was mediated through the specific individuals who had personally engaged with him in teaching and conversation. His influence was therefore more deeply personal, more closely tied to the specific relationship between teacher and student, and more dependent on the quality of those relationships than the influence of writers whose ideas can be accessed through published works.

This is both a limitation and a strength. The limitation is obvious: his influence could not extend beyond the network of personal relationships that his teaching created, whereas the influence of published intellectual work can, in principle, extend indefinitely. The strength is less obvious but equally real: the influence transmitted through personal teaching relationships is often deeper and more transformative than the influence of written texts, because it involves not just the transmission of specific ideas but the development of specific intellectual capacities, ways of thinking and analysing and evaluating evidence, that the written text alone rarely achieves.

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CHAPTER TWELVE: CONTROVERSIES AND CRITICAL REASSESSMENTS

The Complexity of Honest Evaluation

Any honest intellectual biography must engage with the controversies that surround its subject, and Razzaq's life and legacy are not without their controversies. These controversies are not merely biographical curiosities; they illuminate important questions about the relationship between intellectual analysis and political commitment, between personal integrity and institutional complicity, and between the long-term and short-term perspectives on political development that are genuinely important for understanding both Razzaq's contribution and its limits.

The first and most important controversy concerns the question of Razzaq's early support for the Pakistan Movement. As Parts One and Two of this textbook have noted, Razzaq, like many Muslim intellectuals of his generation, supported the Pakistan Movement in its early phase. This support is well documented and is acknowledged in the most reputable sources on his life and thought. The question that it raises for any serious evaluation of his intellectual legacy is: what does this early political position tell us about the reliability and consistency of his analytical frameworks?

The most charitable interpretation, and in the view of the authors of this textbook the most accurate one, is that Razzaq's early support for the Pakistan Movement reflected a specific historical judgment that was shared by many intelligent and well-intentioned Muslims of his generation: the judgment that the specific conditions of Muslim political life in a Hindu-majority India made some form of political separation a necessary protection against permanent minoritisation and marginalisation. This was not an irrational judgment given the political conditions of the 1940s; it was a judgment that could be derived from a serious analysis of the political situation, even if subsequent history demonstrated that its premises were flawed and its conclusions catastrophic.

What the later Razzaq, the Razzaq who had witnessed the failure of the Pakistan project and who had developed his structural analysis of the conditions of genuine democratic governance, came to understand was that the political analysis underlying the Pakistan Movement had been based on a fundamental error about the relationship between cultural identity and political community. The two-nation theory had confused a religious category with a political community, had mistaken shared religious allegiance for the conditions of democratic political unity, and had failed to recognise that the specific cultural, linguistic, historical, and ecological conditions of the Bengal delta constituted a form of political community that was not reducible to religious affiliation.

The evolution of Razzaq's political position from support for the Pakistan Movement to support for Bengali independence represents, from this perspective, not an inconsistency but a development: the application of increasingly sophisticated analytical frameworks to a changing political situation, and the honest acknowledgment of the error of earlier judgments when the evidence of their inadequacy became clear. This kind of intellectual evolution, painful as it is, is one of the marks of genuine intellectual integrity rather than of unreliability.

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The Question of BAKSAL

A more specific and more pointed controversy concerns Razzaq's relationship to the BAKSAL system introduced by Mujib in 1975, which transformed Bangladesh into a one-party state and concentrated political power in ways that were fundamentally incompatible with the democratic principles that Razzaq had consistently advocated. The question is not whether Razzaq supported BAKSAL, which the available evidence does not suggest that he did, but whether his silence about it, his failure to publicly oppose the authoritarian turn that his former student had taken, constituted a form of complicity through inaction.

This is a genuinely difficult question, and it is one that honest engagement with Razzaq's legacy requires acknowledging. Razzaq was not a public political figure in the sense of someone who made public statements on current political issues; he was an academic intellectual whose engagement with politics was conducted through teaching and private conversation rather than through public political commentary. His characteristic response to political developments he found concerning was not public denunciation but private conversation, intellectual analysis shared with students and colleagues who could carry the implications of that analysis into their own public activities.

In this respect, his response to BAKSAL was probably consistent with his general mode of engagement: he would have discussed the authoritarian turn with his students and colleagues, analysed its structural conditions and implications, and expressed his concerns through the private channels of intellectual discourse that were his normal medium. Whether this was sufficient, given the gravity of the political situation, is a question that reasonable people can disagree about, and that the intellectual honesty his own legacy demands requires raising.

The counterargument, which the most sympathetic accounts of his life and legacy make, is that the conditions of public political expression in Bangladesh in 1975 were not conditions in which public opposition to the government by an elderly academic would have been either safe or effective, and that the contribution Razzaq could most usefully make to the eventual restoration of democratic governance was to continue the intellectual work of developing the analytical frameworks that would allow future political actors to understand what had gone wrong and what needed to be done differently. This is a defensible argument, but it is not beyond criticism, and the most honest engagement with his legacy acknowledges both the defence and the criticism.

The Legacy of the Unwritten

A third and more purely intellectual controversy concerns the relationship between Razzaq's refusal to write and the completeness and reliability of the intellectual legacy he has left. The reconstruction of his thought through the testimonies of his students, the secondary literature of his admirers, and the single major text he completed but did not publish, has been the primary scholarly task of engagement with his legacy, and it has been pursued with impressive scholarly rigour by the writers and scholars who have devoted their intellectual energy to it.

But reconstruction is not the same as direct access, and the absence of a published body of work means that there are dimensions of Razzaq's thought that are simply not recoverable with the

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kind of scholarly certainty that a published corpus would allow. The testimonies of his students, however sincere and however impressive the quality of the students, are inevitably selective, shaped by the concerns and perspectives of those who preserved them, and subject to the imperfections of human memory and the processes of retrospective interpretation that all oral tradition undergoes. The analytical frameworks attributed to Razzaq may, in some cases, owe as much to his students' subsequent intellectual development as to his original teaching.

This concern does not invalidate the scholarly project of reconstructing Razzaq's thought; it qualifies it, and the best scholarship in this area has been appropriately careful to distinguish between what can be attributed to Razzaq with confidence and what is reconstruction. But it is a concern that any honest intellectual biography must acknowledge, because the distinction between what a thinker actually thought and what his students and admirers attributed to him is not merely a biographical question; it is a question about the intellectual heritage that is being claimed and the uses to which it is being put.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RAZZAQ'S PHILOSOPHY AND THE 1972 CONSTITUTION OF BANGLADESH

The Constitutional Moment

The 1972 constitution of Bangladesh, adopted on 16 December 1972, the first anniversary of the Pakistani surrender, represented the institutional crystallisation of the political vision that the liberation movement had articulated and that the intellectual tradition Razzaq represented had shaped. The constitution established Bangladesh as a democratic, socialist, secular state grounded in Bengali nationalism, the four foundational principles that became known as the "four pillars" of the constitutional order. It established a parliamentary system of government, a Bill of Rights protecting fundamental freedoms, an independent judiciary, and a range of institutional arrangements designed to give concrete expression to the political vision of the liberation movement.

The relationship between Razzaq's intellectual framework and the specific content of the 1972 constitution is not one of simple derivation; constitutional documents are produced by specific political processes involving negotiation, compromise, and the influence of many different intellectual traditions and political interests. But the substantive alignment between the constitutional principles and the intellectual framework that Razzaq had developed is striking and deserves analysis.

The principle of Bengali nationalism, as articulated in the 1972 constitution, reflected the conception of political community grounded in Bengali cultural identity rather than religious allegiance that Razzaq had consistently advocated. The constitution did not define Bangladesh as an Islamic state or define citizenship in terms of Islamic allegiance; it defined the political community of Bangladesh in terms of Bengali cultural identity and democratic political commitment, consistent with Razzaq's argument that the authentic basis of Bengali political community was cultural and democratic rather than religious.

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The principle of secularism, as understood in the 1972 constitution, was not the French laicite that completely excludes religion from public life; it was, rather, a principle of equal citizenship for all religious communities and the prohibition of state religion, which is consistent with Razzaq's inclusive conception of Bengali political community. The constitution allowed for the full and free practice of religion while refusing to privilege any particular religion as the religion of the state. This formulation represented a specific and carefully considered position on the relationship between religion and politics in the Bangladeshi context, and it reflected the kind of analytical care about the specific conditions of the specific situation that Razzaq's intellectual approach demanded.

The principle of parliamentary democracy and the specific institutional arrangements through which it was expressed, including the prime ministerial system with cabinet accountability to the legislature, the independent judiciary, and the constitutional protection of fundamental rights, all reflected the Laskian democratic theory that Razzaq had transmitted to his students and that had shaped the political thinking of the liberation movement's intellectual leadership. The specific institutional choices made in the constitution, including the decision for a Westminster-style parliamentary system rather than a presidential system, reflected the intellectual tradition's preference for parliamentary accountability as the most effective institutional mechanism for democratic governance in the specific conditions of a newly independent state.

The Subsequent Constitutional Changes and Their Significance

The subsequent history of the 1972 constitution is a history of departures from and partial returns to the original framework, and each of these departures and returns illuminates aspects of the tension between Razzaq's constitutional vision and the specific political dynamics of Bangladeshi governance.

The most significant departure was the 1977 constitutional amendment under the military regime of Ziaur Rahman, which replaced the principle of Bengali nationalism with Bangladeshi nationalism and replaced the principle of secularism with a reference to the sovereignty of Allah and a commitment to Islamic values. This amendment represented a fundamental reorientation of the constitutional framework away from the inclusive Bengali cultural identity and democratic secularism of the 1972 constitution toward a more Islamic conception of Bangladeshi national identity. From Razzaq's analytical perspective, this was precisely the kind of structural change that he had warned against: the subordination of the inclusive Bengali cultural basis of political community to an exclusively religious conception that excluded non-Muslims from full membership.

The Eighth Amendment of 1988, which declared Islam the state religion of Bangladesh, went even further in this direction, and represented the most complete institutional expression of the conception of Bangladeshi political community grounded in Islamic rather than Bengali identity. From Razzaq's perspective, this amendment was not merely constitutionally problematic but structurally dangerous, because it created an institutional framework in which the state itself was aligned with one religious community against others, undermining the equal citizenship that democratic governance requires.

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The partial return to the original constitutional framework through the Supreme Court's decision in 2011, which reaffirmed the four original pillars of the constitution while allowing for their coexistence with the state religion provision, represents an institutional attempt to navigate between the original vision and the subsequent departures in a way that preserves something of both. Whether this navigation is successful or merely postpones a more fundamental reckoning with the constitutional framework is a question that Razzaq's analytical approach would examine with characteristic structural depth.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE ECOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF LIBERATION — RAZZAQ'S ENVIRONMENTAL THINKING AND THE INDEPENDENT STATE

The Delta as Political Territory

One of the dimensions of Razzaq's intellectual contribution that has received less attention than it deserves in the context of the liberation movement is his ecological analysis of the Bengal delta and its implications for the kind of state that an independent Bangladesh needed to be. This ecological analysis, which was a central dimension of his 1980 lecture as examined in Part Two, was not developed in a historical vacuum; it reflected an understanding of the relationship between the physical geography of the delta and the political possibilities of the territory that Razzaq had been developing across decades of teaching and reflection.

The specific ecological insight that Razzaq brought to the analysis of Bangladesh's political situation was the recognition that the delta's specific physical characteristics, its network of rivers, its low-lying terrain, its vulnerability to flooding and cyclones, its extraordinary agricultural fertility when managed well and its equally extraordinary vulnerability to mismanagement, were not merely environmental background conditions but structural determinants of the political economy of the territory and therefore of the kind of political institutions and economic policies that could succeed within it.

This insight had specific implications for the liberation movement's vision of what an independent Bangladesh should be. If the physical geography of the delta is the primary structural condition of its economic possibilities, then the economic policies of an independent Bangladesh must be designed with the specific character of that geography in mind. Development strategies developed for flat, arid, or semi-arid territories, for landlocked territories, for territories with different ecological conditions, cannot be straightforwardly applied to the delta without modification and potentially disastrous failure. An independent Bangladesh needed an economic strategy that was specifically designed for the delta's specific conditions, that recognised the rivers as assets rather than obstacles, that developed agricultural practices and economic infrastructure that worked with the ecological dynamics of the delta rather than against them.

This was, in the early post-independence period, an insight that was significantly ahead of its time. The development economics mainstream of the 1970s was dominated by models that emphasised industrialisation, urban development, and the transformation of agricultural societies

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into industrial ones through the application of capital and technology. The specific ecological conditions of particular territories were often treated as merely technical problems to be solved through appropriate engineering interventions rather than as fundamental structural conditions that ought to shape development strategy from the outset.

Razzaq's insistence on the primacy of the delta's ecological conditions for Bangladeshi development thinking anticipated by several decades the emergence of the ecosystem services framework, the recognition in contemporary environmental economics that the ecological systems of a territory provide fundamental economic services, water regulation, flood control, agricultural fertility, fisheries productivity, and many others, that must be maintained and valued in any sustainable development strategy. The contemporary recognition of Bangladesh's specific vulnerability to climate change, and the specific ways in which that vulnerability is shaped by the ecological characteristics of the delta, gives Razzaq's ecological economic thinking a contemporary relevance that he could not have fully anticipated but that his analytical framework had laid the groundwork for.

Water as a Political Issue

The most specific and politically consequential dimension of Razzaq's ecological analysis was his attention to the rivers and their management as a fundamental political question for Bangladesh. The Bangladesh delta is traversed by some of the world's most important river systems, including the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, and the Meghna, and the management of these rivers, their flows, their floods, their fisheries, and their navigation, is a fundamental determinant of the economic and social conditions of millions of Bangladeshis.

The political dimension of river management in the Bangladeshi context is intensified by the fact that most of the major rivers that flow through Bangladesh originate in territories controlled by other states, primarily India, and that decisions made by those states about water management upstream have profound consequences for conditions in Bangladesh downstream. The specific issue of the Farakka Barrage on the Ganges, which India completed in 1975 and which controlled the flow of Ganges water into Bangladesh, causing significant problems for navigation, agriculture, and salinity in the southwestern regions of Bangladesh, was one of the most concrete examples of the way in which upstream water management decisions could create serious downstream consequences in a state that had little control over those decisions.

Razzaq's analysis of this issue was situated within his broader ecological economic framework for thinking about Bangladesh's development. The rivers were not merely physical features of the landscape; they were the fundamental infrastructure of the delta's economy, its primary pathways of trade and communication, the source of the agricultural fertility that sustained its population, and the determinant of its vulnerability to flooding and drought. Any development strategy for Bangladesh that failed to grapple seriously with the political economy of river management, including the international political dimensions of water rights and upstream-downstream relationships, was failing to engage with one of the most fundamental structural conditions of the territory.

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The Ganges Waters Treaty of 1996, negotiated during the tenure of the Hasina government by the minister for water resources, who was a politician rather than a figure from the academic intellectual tradition, represented a concrete political achievement in the management of the Bangladesh-India water relationship. But the intellectual framework that made it possible to understand why such a treaty was necessary and what it needed to achieve was one that owed something to the tradition of ecological economic thinking that Razzaq had helped to develop.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE LIVING INHERITANCE — RAZZAQ'S LIBERATION LEGACY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

How the Legacy Has Been Received

The reception of Razzaq's intellectual legacy in the context of Bangladesh's liberation history has been, like the man himself, complex, contested, and revealing of the wider tensions in Bangladeshi political and intellectual culture. The publication of "Political Parties in India" in 2022, more than seven decades after it was completed, was the most important recent event in the ongoing process of engaging with and evaluating that legacy, and the scholarly responses to the publication illuminate both the enduring relevance and the specific limits of Razzaq's analytical contribution.

The review forum in the Journal of Global South Asia Dialogue in 2022 brought together a range of scholarly perspectives on the text and its significance, and the diversity of those perspectives reflects the genuine complexity of Razzaq's intellectual legacy. Scholars who read the text primarily as a work of comparative political science assessed it against the standards of contemporary political science and found both significant analytical achievements and limitations reflecting the specific theoretical resources available to Razzaq at the time of writing. Scholars who read it primarily as a document of Bangladesh's intellectual history found in it a remarkable early expression of the structural political analysis that would prove so relevant to subsequent developments. Scholars who read it in the context of contemporary postcolonial theory found it a rich resource for thinking about the specific dynamics of post-colonial party politics in South Asia.

The common thread in these diverse assessments is the recognition that Razzaq was doing something genuinely significant and genuinely original in his analysis of South Asian political parties: he was applying a structural political sociological framework to the specific conditions of post-colonial politics in ways that went beyond the available theoretical frameworks and that anticipated, in important respects, the development of political science in the subsequent decades. The fact that this work remained unpublished for seven decades is, from this perspective, one of the great intellectual tragedies of Bangladeshi scholarly life: a major intellectual contribution that could have shaped the development of political science in the subcontinent was instead preserved only in the oral tradition and in the memories of students, denying the broader scholarly community access to a genuinely important analytical resource.

The Contemporary Relevance of the Liberation Analysis

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The specific analysis of the liberation movement that this part of the textbook has developed has direct relevance to the political challenges that Bangladesh faces in the third decade of the twenty-first century. The structural conditions that Razzaq identified as essential to genuine democratic governance, effective civilian control of the military, political parties that are genuine democratic institutions rather than vehicles for personal or factional power, civil society institutions that sustain critical public discourse, and economic development strategies that are suited to the specific ecological conditions of the territory, remain as relevant and as challenging as they were in 1971.

The political history of Bangladesh since independence, with its pattern of military coups, authoritarian governance, dynastic politics in which the major parties are each dominated by the family of a founding figure, and periodic crises of constitutional governance, reflects the persistence of the structural conditions that Razzaq's analysis identified as the primary obstacles to genuine democratic governance. The failure to build the kind of broad-based, institutionally rooted political organisations that his analysis showed were necessary for democratic stability has produced exactly the pattern of political instability and authoritarian temptation that his structural diagnosis predicted.

At the same time, Bangladesh's extraordinary achievements in economic and social development since independence, including dramatic reductions in poverty, significant improvements in education and health outcomes, and remarkable agricultural productivity increases, demonstrate the resilience and capacity of the Bengali people and the validity of the ecological economic insight that recognised the delta's specific conditions as a foundation for development rather than merely an obstacle to it. The tension between these achievements and the persistent challenges to democratic governance captures, in contemporary terms, the fundamental dynamic that Razzaq's analysis identified: that the conditions of material development and the conditions of democratic governance are related but not identical, that economic progress does not automatically produce democratic consolidation, and that the institutional work of building genuine democratic governance is a separate and in some respects more difficult task than the developmental work of improving economic and social conditions.

The Question of Constitutional Identity in 2024-2026

The most recent chapters of Bangladesh's constitutional history, including the political crisis of 2024 that produced significant public protests, governmental transitions, and renewed debates about the character of the Bangladeshi state, give Razzaq's analysis a specifically contemporary relevance that would not have been predictable when his major texts were written. The fundamental questions that his analysis raised about the character of the Bangladeshi political community, the relationship between Bengali cultural identity and Islamic political identity, the institutional conditions of genuine democratic governance, and the structural challenges of building a state that is genuinely accountable to its citizens, remain live and contested questions in the Bangladesh of 2025 and 2026.

The debates about constitutional identity that these political events have reignited, the questions about whether Bangladesh should define itself primarily as a secular Bengali nation or as an Islamic state, whether the principle of secularism should be restored to its 1972 formulation or

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whether the state religion provision reflects a genuine dimension of national identity that should be preserved, are directly continuous with the debates that Razzaq's intellectual framework addressed in the context of the liberation movement. His analysis does not resolve these debates, but it provides an intellectual framework for engaging with them that insists on the complexity of Bengali Muslim identity and on the need for political arrangements that can accommodate that complexity without reducing it to any single dimension.

The continuing relevance of this framework, demonstrated by the persistence of the questions it addresses and by the intellectual tools it provides for engaging with them, is the most powerful evidence of the enduring significance of Razzaq's intellectual contribution. He was not writing for his own time alone, even though he was deeply grounded in the specific conditions of his time. He was thinking through the permanent questions of political community, democratic governance, and cultural identity in ways that continue to illuminate the specific challenges of the present, more than a quarter century after his death.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIBERATION — RAZZAQ'S CONTRIBUTION TO LIBERATION THOUGHT AS A GLOBAL TRADITION

Liberation Thought as a Philosophical Category

The intellectual tradition of liberation thought, as a global philosophical category, encompasses a range of theoretical frameworks developed across multiple contexts of political oppression and political struggle in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Liberation theology in Latin America, developed by theologians like Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff, applied the resources of Christian theology to the analysis of structural poverty and political oppression and generated a form of political theology that has shaped both political thought and political movements across the developing world. Critical race theory in the United States, developed by legal scholars like Derrick Bell and Kimberly Crenshaw, applied critical legal analysis to the structural dimensions of racial domination in American society and law. Dalit liberation thought in India, represented most powerfully by B.R. Ambedkar's political philosophy, applied the resources of both Western liberal theory and Buddhist ethics to the analysis and critique of caste domination.

Razzaq's contribution to the intellectual tradition of liberation thought is distinctive in several respects that are worth identifying precisely because they illuminate what is most original and most valuable in his intellectual legacy. Unlike most liberation thinkers, Razzaq did not develop his contribution primarily through published theoretical texts but through the oral tradition of teaching, which gave his contribution a different character and a different mode of transmission. Unlike most liberation thinkers, Razzaq operated within a tradition of Anglo-American democratic political theory, specifically the Laskian democratic socialist tradition, rather than drawing primarily on specifically postcolonial or non-Western intellectual resources. And unlike most liberation thinkers, Razzaq was explicitly concerned with the institutional and structural conditions of democratic governance in the post-liberation state, rather than focusing primarily on the analysis of oppression and the conditions of liberation.

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This third distinctive characteristic is perhaps the most important for the evaluation of Razzaq's contribution to liberation thought as a philosophical tradition. Most liberation thinking focuses on the analysis of the specific forms of oppression against which it is directed and on the theoretical justification of the claims to liberation that the oppressed make against their oppressors. Razzaq's contribution engaged with these dimensions but moved beyond them to the question of what liberation actually requires in institutional terms, what kind of state and what kind of political culture and what kind of economic arrangements are necessary to give the liberated community the genuine political self-governance that liberation promises.

This move beyond the analysis of oppression to the analysis of the conditions of genuine self-governance is, in many respects, the most philosophically mature and most practically important dimension of Razzaq's contribution to liberation thought. It is easy to be clear about what liberation means in negative terms, the end of domination, the removal of the oppressor, the achievement of independence. It is much more difficult, and much more important, to be clear about what liberation means in positive terms, the specific institutional, economic, cultural, and psychological conditions that genuine political self-governance requires and that any post-liberation state must work to create.

Razzaq's structural analysis of these conditions, grounded in the specific historical experience of the Bengal delta and enriched by his engagement with the democratic socialist political tradition, constitutes a contribution to liberation thought that has not been adequately recognised in the global scholarly literature on this tradition. Part of the reason for this non-recognition is the absence of published texts, which prevents the kind of citation and engagement through which intellectual traditions normally identify and honour their contributors. Part of it is the specific linguistic and cultural context, the fact that most of the scholarly engagement with Razzaq's legacy has been conducted in Bengali and in the specific context of Bangladeshi intellectual life, without the translation into English and the global academic distribution that would be necessary for recognition in the broader international scholarly community.

The Application of Democratic Theory to Liberation Contexts

The most philosophically significant aspect of Razzaq's contribution to liberation thought is his application of democratic theory to the specific conditions of liberation and post-liberation politics. This application raises a set of philosophical questions that are genuinely difficult and that democratic theory has not always engaged with the seriousness they deserve.

The first question is the relationship between self-determination and democracy. The principle of self-determination, the right of a people to determine their own political future without external domination, is a foundational principle of the post-1945 international order and a central claim of liberation movements. But the principle of democracy, the requirement that political authority be grounded in the equal participation and consent of all citizens, is a distinct principle that does not automatically follow from self-determination. A self-determining people can choose to govern themselves undemocratically, can install authoritarian leaders or permit the domination of minorities, and the claim to self-determination provides no internal resources for resisting these outcomes.

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Razzaq's framework addressed this problem by insisting on the connection between self-determination and democracy at the level of political theory. Self-determination, properly understood, is not merely the right of a people to be free from external domination; it is the right to govern themselves through their own democratic institutions, to make collective decisions about their common good through processes that give equal standing to all members of the political community. A self-determination that produces an authoritarian state is not genuine self-determination but the substitution of internal domination for external domination. The achievement of genuine self-determination requires the achievement of genuine democratic governance, which requires in turn the building of the institutional conditions without which democracy cannot function.

This philosophical position has important implications for how liberation movements evaluate their own success and failure. A liberation movement that achieves formal independence, removing the external oppressor and creating an independent state, has achieved only a necessary but not a sufficient condition of genuine self-determination. The sufficient condition is the actual achievement of democratic self-governance, which depends on the building of the institutional, economic, and cultural conditions that genuine democracy requires. A liberation movement that achieves formal independence but fails to build these conditions has achieved liberation in form but not in substance, has exchanged one form of domination for another, and has therefore failed in its most fundamental political project.

The second philosophical question concerns the relationship between the specific cultural identity of the liberated people and the universal principles of democratic governance. Liberation movements typically articulate their claims in the language of cultural identity, the Bengali people, the Algerian nation, the Palestinian people, and ground their political claims in the right of this specific cultural community to determine its own political future. But the universal principles of democratic governance, including equal citizenship, the rule of law, minority rights, and fundamental freedoms, are not culturally specific; they apply to all political communities regardless of their cultural identity.

Razzaq's framework navigated this tension by insisting on both dimensions simultaneously. Bengali cultural identity was the specific basis of the political community of Bangladesh, and it needed to be acknowledged, valued, and protected as the foundation of collective self-understanding and political solidarity. But the universal principles of democratic governance applied to Bangladesh just as they applied to every other political community, and the specific cultural character of Bangladesh provided no exemption from the requirements of equal citizenship, minority rights, and fundamental freedoms. The challenge for Bangladesh was to build a political community that was genuinely Bengali in its cultural character and genuinely democratic in its political institutions, that honoured the specific heritage of Bengali culture while meeting the universal standards of democratic governance.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: THE RAZZAQ METHOD AND THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT — PEDAGOGY AS POLITICAL CONTRIBUTION

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Teaching as Liberation

One of the most philosophically rich dimensions of Razzaq's contribution to the liberation movement is the connection between his pedagogical practice and the political project of liberation. The connection is not merely biographical, the observation that he taught people who went on to lead a liberation movement, but philosophical: there is a deep structural connection between the kind of teaching that Razzaq practiced and the kind of political liberation that the Bangladesh movement sought to achieve.

The connection runs through the concept of political consciousness. Razzaq's teaching was, at its core, a practice of developing political consciousness: the capacity of students to understand their political situation in its structural depth, to recognise domination when they encountered it and understand its mechanisms, to identify the conditions that genuine self-governance requires, and to think rigorously about what needs to be done to achieve those conditions. This development of political consciousness is not merely a preparatory step for political action; it is itself a form of political liberation, the liberation of the mind from the ideological frameworks that domination uses to legitimise itself.

Colonial domination, and the quasi-colonial domination of East Pakistan by the West Pakistani elite, does not sustain itself only or even primarily through direct coercion. It sustains itself also through ideological frameworks that represent the dominated as naturally or culturally inferior, as incapable of self-governance, as dependent on the superior capacity of the dominant group. The liberation of a dominated people begins with the intellectual liberation from these ideological frameworks, the development of the analytical capacity to see through the legitimising claims of the dominant order and to understand the structural conditions of domination for what they are.

Razzaq's teaching was a systematic practice of this intellectual liberation. By teaching his students to analyse political situations in their structural depth, to trace the mechanisms through which power operates and economic resources are distributed, to recognise the specific institutional arrangements through which domination is maintained, he was equipping them with the analytical tools necessary for political liberation in the most fundamental sense. Before the Bengali people could liberate themselves from Pakistani political domination, they needed to understand that domination clearly enough to recognise it as domination rather than accepting it as a natural or inevitable condition. Razzaq's teaching provided that understanding.

The Socratic Dimension

The specifically Socratic character of Razzaq's teaching method, his use of questioning and dialogue rather than direct instruction to develop his students' analytical capacity, has a specific philosophical significance in the context of the liberation movement. The Socratic method is a pedagogical practice grounded in a specific epistemological and ethical commitment: the commitment to the idea that genuine understanding is not something that can be transmitted from teacher to student through instruction but must be developed by each student through the active exercise of their own analytical capacities.

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This epistemological commitment has important political implications. If genuine understanding must be achieved through the active exercise of one's own analytical capacity rather than received through instruction, then the political subject capable of genuine democratic self-governance must be a subject who has developed the capacity for independent political judgment rather than one who merely follows the instructions of a political leader or accepts the prescriptions of a political party. The development of this capacity for independent political judgment is precisely what Razzaq's Socratic teaching was designed to promote.

The connection to democratic theory is direct and fundamental. Genuine democratic governance requires citizens who are capable of independent political judgment, who can evaluate the claims and performances of their political representatives on the basis of their own understanding of the political situation rather than on the basis of deference to authority or loyalty to a political party or identification with a charismatic leader. The development of this capacity is not automatic; it requires specific forms of education and specific forms of intellectual culture. Razzaq's Socratic teaching was a specific practice designed to develop this capacity in his students, and the political significance of that practice extended far beyond the immediate context of his classrooms and seminars.

The most vivid example of this significance is, once again, the relationship with Sheikh Mujib. What Mujib absorbed from Razzaq's teaching was not merely specific political ideas but, more fundamentally, the capacity for independent political judgment grounded in structural understanding. This capacity expressed itself throughout Mujib's political career in his ability to understand the structural conditions of the East Pakistan situation more clearly than many of his contemporaries, to make strategic political judgments that were grounded in analysis rather than merely in political intuition, and to articulate a political vision that connected the specific grievances of the Bengali population to the structural conditions that had produced those grievances.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: POLITICAL ECONOMY, JURISPRUDENCE, AND THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT — THE TECHNICAL DIMENSIONS

The Legal Framework of the Liberation Claim

The claim to independence that Bangladesh asserted in 1971 was not merely a political claim; it was also a legal and philosophical claim that needed to be grounded in the framework of international law and the principles of self-determination that had been developing in the post-1945 international order. The legal dimensions of the independence claim were worked out primarily by jurists and legal scholars who were part of the broader intellectual community that Razzaq's teaching had shaped, and the specific legal arguments they developed reflected the analytical frameworks that that teaching had provided.

The most important legal dimension of the independence claim was the argument based on the principle of self-determination, which had been recognised in the United Nations Charter and subsequent international instruments as a right of peoples under colonial or quasi-colonial

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domination. The application of this principle to the East Pakistan situation required establishing that the Bengali population constituted a "people" in the relevant legal sense, that they were subject to a form of domination equivalent to colonial domination, and that the specific events of 1971, particularly the Pakistani military's refusal to accept the results of the 1970 elections and its subsequent use of force against the civilian population, constituted grounds for the exercise of the right of self-determination through the declaration of independence.

These legal arguments were not purely technical; they drew on the substantive political philosophical framework that defined what constitutes a people and what constitutes domination, and that framework was one that Razzaq's teaching had developed. The Bengali population constituted a people, in the politically relevant sense, not because of their religious identity alone but because of their shared cultural, linguistic, and historical identity as Bengalis, grounded in the specific conditions of the Bengal delta. The Pakistani domination they were subject to was equivalent to colonial domination because it systematically denied them the capacity for genuine political self-governance through constitutional, economic, and cultural arrangements that privileged the West Pakistani elite at the expense of the Bengali majority.

The legal framework also engaged with the question of the conditions under which a declaration of independence is legally and morally justifiable in international law. The dominant position in international law prior to 1971 was that the right of self-determination did not, in general, extend to the right of secession by subnational populations within an existing state, because the recognition of such a right would threaten the territorial integrity of states and potentially destabilise the international order. The Bangladesh case challenged this dominant position by arguing that when a state uses systematic violence against its own population to prevent the exercise of a democratically established political mandate, the normal presumption in favour of territorial integrity is suspended and the right of the oppressed population to defend itself through whatever means are available, including the declaration of independence and the appeal for international support, is activated.

This argument was not accepted by all states in the international community in 1971, and the specific recognition of Bangladesh as an independent state came relatively slowly and incompletely in the immediate aftermath of independence. But the argument itself has had an enduring influence on the development of international law on self-determination and humanitarian intervention, contributing to the evolution of the concept of the Responsibility to Protect that was formally adopted by the United Nations in 2005 and that represents a significant development in the relationship between state sovereignty and the international community's responsibility for the protection of populations against systematic state violence.

The Economic Jurisprudence of the New State

The liberation movement's economic vision, as articulated in the Six Points and further developed in the intellectual tradition Razzaq represented, had important implications not only for economic policy but for the legal and institutional framework that would govern the economic life of the new state. The specific economic claims that Bangladesh would need to assert, including the claims to control its own foreign exchange earnings, to establish its own central bank and monetary policy, to control trade policy and taxation, and to develop its own

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economic infrastructure, were not merely policy choices; they were legal and institutional claims that needed to be grounded in specific constitutional provisions and specific institutional designs.

The constitutional provisions on economic rights in the 1972 constitution, including the recognition of the right to work and to a fair wage, the commitment to reduce economic inequality, the provision for state ownership of key economic institutions, and the framework for economic planning, reflected the democratic socialist economic philosophy that the intellectual tradition Razzaq represented had consistently advocated. The specific institutional arrangements through which these constitutional commitments were to be given effect, including the Bangladesh Bank as the central bank with control over monetary policy, the Ministry of Finance with control over fiscal policy, and the Planning Commission with responsibility for development planning, were the institutional expression of the economic sovereignty that the liberation movement had claimed.

The subsequent evolution of these institutional arrangements, including the major adjustments made under the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s and the integration of Bangladesh into the global trading system through WTO membership and trade liberalisation, represents a complex history of interaction between the original economic vision and the pressures of the international economic environment. Razzaq's ecological economic framework, with its insistence on the importance of the specific conditions of the delta and its scepticism of development models developed for different conditions, provides an analytical perspective from which to evaluate this history that is not available from either the neoclassical economics mainstream or from simple nationalist critiques of globalisation.

CHAPTER NINETEEN: RAZZAQ'S WARNINGS UNHEEDED — THE POLITICAL FAILURES OF POST-INDEPENDENCE BANGLADESH AND WHAT THEY TELL US

The Pattern of Prophetic Analysis

There is a painful dimension to any serious engagement with Razzaq's intellectual legacy in the context of post-independence Bangladesh's political history, and it consists in the recognition that many of the structural risks that his analysis identified were not avoided but realised. The military coups of 1975 and 1982, the dynastic consolidation of the major political parties around the families of Mujib and Zia, the periodic breakdown of democratic governance and the resort to emergency powers, the corruption of political institutions by personal and factional interests, the failure to develop a genuinely independent judiciary and free media, the persistence of structural economic inequalities and the inadequacy of development strategies to the specific ecological conditions of the delta: all of these are dimensions of Bangladesh's post-independence history that Razzaq's structural analysis had identified as structural risks, and that the political choices made by Bangladesh's political leadership had failed to prevent.

This is not a reason to evaluate Razzaq's intellectual contribution negatively; to the contrary, it is evidence of the accuracy and depth of his structural analysis. The accurate prediction of structural risks is not the same as the ability to prevent them, and Razzaq, as an intellectual rather

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than a political actor, had no direct power to impose the institutional choices that his analysis showed were necessary. What he had was the capacity to provide the analytical understanding that would equip political actors to make better choices, and to transmit that understanding to the students who became political actors, judges, journalists, economists, and civil society leaders. The ultimate failure of that transmission to prevent the structural risks from being realised reflects not the inadequacy of the analysis but the gap between analytical understanding and political will that is one of the fundamental problems of democratic governance everywhere.

The Military and the State

The most consequential of the structural risks that Razzaq identified and that were not adequately addressed was the risk of military dominance of the political system. The two military coups of 1975 and 1982, and the longer periods of military-influenced governance that followed them, represented precisely the structural failure that Razzaq's analysis had predicted: the capture of the state apparatus by the military at the expense of civilian democratic institutions, in conditions where those institutions had not been sufficiently developed and consolidated to resist such capture.

The specific mechanism of the failure is instructive from the perspective of Razzaq's structural analysis. The 1971 liberation war had necessarily involved the military as a central actor in achieving independence, and the military role in the liberation struggle gave military officers a claim to political legitimacy and institutional authority in the new state that was difficult to challenge from within the civilian political culture. The liberation heroes who had fought in the Mukti Bahini were natural candidates for political authority in the new state, and the military institution that had been created and trained during the liberation struggle was a powerful and coherent institution in a state where other institutions were weak and fragmented.

The transformation of this military legitimacy into institutional dominance of the political system was not inevitable; it was the result of specific failures of civilian political institution-building and specific choices by political actors who used the military as an instrument of political power in ways that ultimately undermined civilian control. But the structural risk of this outcome was one that Razzaq's analysis had clearly identified, and the failure to take adequate institutional measures to prevent it, particularly during the critical period of the early 1970s when the civilian institutions of the new state were being established, represents one of the most significant failures of Bangladesh's post-independence political development.

The Question of Dynastic Politics

A second structural risk that Razzaq had identified and analysed, drawing on his analysis of South Asian political party dynamics in his thesis on political parties, was the tendency toward dynastic politics: the concentration of political leadership in the families of founding figures, the inheritance of political authority through family connection rather than democratic selection, the subordination of party institutions to personal and familial loyalty. This tendency, which he had identified as a persistent pathology of South Asian politics in his 1950 thesis, has been fully realised in Bangladesh's post-independence political history, with the two major parties

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dominated respectively by the family of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the family of Ziaur Rahman.

The dynastic structure of Bangladeshi politics is not merely an organisational inconvenience; it has profound structural consequences for the quality of democratic governance. When political authority is inherited through family connection rather than earned through democratic competition, the accountability mechanisms that genuine democracy requires are undermined. The leader who inherits authority through family connection is accountable to the family and its interests rather than to the party's membership and the broader electorate, and the party organisation is structured to serve the interests of the dynastic family rather than to represent the interests of its constituency.

Razzaq's analysis of this pathology was grounded in the historical analysis of South Asian political party development that his thesis had developed, and his prescriptions, while never fully articulated in a systematic form, pointed consistently toward the importance of building party institutions that were genuinely democratic in their internal structure, that selected leadership through competitive democratic processes rather than dynastic succession, and that were accountable to their membership and constituency rather than to a founding family. These prescriptions were not followed, and the structural consequences of their non-implementation have been profound and persistent.

CHAPTER TWENTY: SYNTHESIS — THE INTELLECTUAL ARCHITECTURE OF LIBERATION AND ITS CONTINUING SIGNIFICANCE

What the Liberation Reveals About the Intellectual

The relationship between Razzaq's intellectual contribution and the Bangladesh liberation movement reveals something important and generally significant about the relationship between intellectual life and political liberation. It reveals that the most valuable contribution an intellectual can make to a liberation movement is not unconditional political endorsement but the development of the analytical frameworks that allow the movement to understand its own situation clearly enough to pursue its goals effectively and to build, in the aftermath of success, the institutional conditions that genuine political liberation requires.

This contribution is harder to recognise and harder to evaluate than the contributions of political leaders, military commanders, and organisational activists, because it works through the less visible medium of intellectual formation rather than through the visible medium of political action. But it is, in the long run, at least as important as those more visible contributions, because it determines the intellectual quality of the political choices that political leaders, military commanders, and organisational activists make.

Razzaq's intellectual contribution to the Bangladesh liberation movement was precisely of this kind. He did not lead political organisations or command military units or make the decisive political choices that brought Bangladesh into existence. He did something different and, in the

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long run, more fundamental: he shaped the intellectual formation of the generation of political leaders, legal scholars, economists, and public intellectuals who made those choices, providing them with the analytical frameworks, the historical depth, and the normative commitments that gave those choices their specific character and their specific significance.

The Permanent Questions

The questions that Razzaq's intellectual engagement with the liberation movement raised are not questions that have been resolved by the achievement of independence or by the subsequent development of Bangladesh as a state. They are permanent questions about the relationship between cultural identity and political community, between self-determination and democratic governance, between the conditions of liberation and the conditions of genuine political self-governance, that any serious engagement with Bengali Muslim political life must continue to address.

These are questions that the intellectual tradition Razzaq represented raises, in its most serious formulation, as questions about the conditions of human dignity and political freedom in the specific context of a specific people's historical experience. The answers that Razzaq's analysis suggested are not final answers; they are frameworks for approaching questions that have no final answers, analytical tools for engaging with challenges that are permanent features of political life rather than problems that can be definitively solved. The continuing relevance of these frameworks, demonstrated by the persistence of the challenges they address, is the most powerful testimony to the depth and the durability of his intellectual achievement.

The liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 was a moment of extraordinary historical significance, one of the most consequential political events of the twentieth century in South Asia and in the broader history of self-determination movements. Razzaq's contribution to that moment was not made on the battlefield or in the diplomatic arena but in the lecture halls and conversation rooms of the University of Dhaka, in the patient and rigorous work of intellectual formation that gave the liberation movement its most thoughtful leaders and its most analytically sophisticated political vision. That contribution deserves the kind of careful, critical, and comprehensive scholarly engagement that this textbook has attempted to provide, not as an act of reverence but as an act of intellectual fidelity to the standards of rigour and honesty that Razzaq himself embodied and that his legacy continues to demand.

Conclusion of Part Three: The Philosopher and the Liberation

Part Three of this textbook has traced the full arc of Razzaq's engagement with the Bangladesh liberation movement, from the early structural analysis of East Pakistan's political situation through the decade of intellectual resistance in the 1960s, the crisis of March 1971 and its personal consequences, the intellectual analysis of why Pakistani unity had failed and what Bengali independence required, the recognition of his contribution in the National Professorship and the Delhi honorary doctorate, the evaluation of his constitutional vision in the 1972

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constitutional framework, and the analysis of the continuing relevance of his intellectual contribution to the challenges of Bangladesh's twenty-first century political life.

What emerges from this engagement is a portrait of a man whose contribution to his nation's liberation was made through the most characteristic and most distinctive medium of his intellectual life: the transformation of how his students thought about political reality, the development in them of the analytical capacity and the normative commitments necessary for genuine political understanding. This contribution was, by the standards of dramatic political history, quiet and invisible, unfolding in seminar rooms and private conversations rather than in public demonstrations and political confrontations. But it was, in the deepest sense, essential: the liberation of Bangladesh required not only the courage and organisation of political leaders and military fighters but the intellectual preparation that made their choices intelligent rather than merely courageous, grounded rather than merely emotional, aimed at genuine self-governance rather than merely at the removal of the external oppressor.

Razzaq's legacy in the context of the liberation movement is, ultimately, the legacy of the intellectual who takes seriously the claim that ideas matter in politics, that the quality of political thinking shapes the quality of political outcomes, and that the most important service any individual can render to a movement for political liberation is to help it think clearly about what liberation actually requires. In a world that tends to celebrate the visible and dramatic contributions of political and military leadership while overlooking the quieter but equally essential contributions of intellectual formation, Razzaq's legacy is a reminder of what the life of the mind, pursued with full rigour and full integrity, can contribute to the most consequential political struggles of an era.

Selected Bibliography and Further Reading for Part Three

Primary sources for Part Three begin with the texts examined in Part Two: "Political Parties in India" (2022), "Bangladesh: State of the Nation" (1980), the memoir of Ahmed Sofa, and the interview-based book by Sardar Fazlul Karim. These texts, read now with attention to what they reveal about Razzaq's understanding of the liberation movement and its challenges, offer a different perspective from the purely intellectual one that Part Two emphasised.

For the historical context of the liberation movement, Badruddin Umar's multi-volume history of the language movement and its political consequences remains indispensable background. Talukder Maniruzzaman's "The Bangladesh Revolution and Its Aftermath" (1980) provides the most rigorous political science analysis of the liberation war and its immediate consequences. Lawrence Lifschultz and Kai Bird's edited collection "Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution" provides important perspectives on the post-liberation period and its failures.

Rounaq Jahan's "Pakistan: Failure in National Integration" (1972), published in the immediate aftermath of the liberation war, provides a scholarly analysis of the structural conditions that produced Pakistani political failure that is directly complementary to Razzaq's structural analysis. Ayesha Jalal's work on Pakistani political history, including "The State of Martial Rule"

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(1990), provides essential background for understanding the military dimension of Pakistani political failure.

For the comparative dimensions of the analysis, Linz and Stepan's "Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation" (1996) provides the most comprehensive theoretical framework for the kind of structural analysis of democratic preconditions that Razzaq was developing. Larry Diamond's "The Spirit of Democracy" (2008) and subsequent work provide contemporary political science perspectives on the conditions of democratic consolidation that are directly relevant to the analysis of Bangladesh's post-independence political development.

For the ecological economic dimensions, the work of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) based in Dhaka, and particularly the publications of its founder and director Saleemul Huq and his colleagues, provides contemporary scientific and policy analysis of Bangladesh's ecological economic situation that gives Razzaq's ecological economic framework a contemporary scientific context. Bangladesh's Delta Plan 2100, developed under the Hasina government with Dutch technical assistance, represents the most ambitious practical expression of the ecological economic approach to Bangladeshi development that Razzaq's framework anticipates.

For the philosophical and theoretical frameworks deployed in Part Three's analysis, Seyla Benhabib's "The Rights of Others" (2004) provides the most sophisticated contemporary philosophical analysis of the relationship between cultural identity, citizenship, and democratic governance that is directly relevant to Razzaq's position on Bengali Muslim political identity. Jurgen Habermas's contributions to constitutional patriotism and the conditions of deliberative democracy provide a theoretical framework that illuminates important dimensions of Razzaq's democratic theory. Amartya Sen's "The Argumentative Indian" (2005) provides a specifically South Asian perspective on the relationship between intellectual tradition, cultural identity, and democratic governance that resonates deeply with Razzaq's intellectual commitments.

The recent scholarship on the Bangladesh liberation movement, including Ali Riaz's work on Bangladeshi politics and society, Naomi Hossain's research on the politics of development in Bangladesh, and Meghna Guhathakurta's historical research on the liberation struggle and its aftermath, provides the most current scholarly perspective on the historical events and their interpretation that Part Three has engaged with. This scholarship, produced in the second and third decades of the twenty-first century, brings both new empirical evidence and new analytical frameworks to the study of the liberation movement and its legacy, and it both confirms and extends the structural analysis that Razzaq's intellectual tradition had established.

End of Part Three. Part Four will examine the reception and interpretation of Razzaq's ideas in post-independence Bangladesh, their influence on the major intellectual and political movements of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the controversies that arose from competing interpretations of his legacy, and the specific institutional expressions of his influence in Bangladesh's intellectual and cultural life.

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PART FOUR: RECEPTION, CONTROVERSY, AND THE LIVING LEGACY - ABDUR RAZZAQ AND THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF POST-INDEPENDENCE BANGLADESH

Ideas, Institutions, Controversies, Oriental Studies, Jurisprudence, Economic Philosophy, and the Sociology of a Mind That Refused to Be Contained

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Preface to Part Four

The most remarkable thing about an intellectual legacy is not what the intellectual themselves said or wrote but what happens to their ideas after they leave the room. In the case of Professor Abdur Razzaq, whose entire intellectual career was conducted through conversation, lecture, and the powerful medium of personal encounter rather than through the published page, the question of legacy is particularly acute and particularly interesting. When a man writes books, his legacy is relatively easy to trace: scholars read the books, respond to them, critique them, reinterpret them, and the intellectual tradition generated by a published corpus has a kind of documentary solidity that allows researchers to follow the argument across generations. When a man teaches through conversation, when his ideas circulate primarily through the minds of his students and find their expression in the work of others rather than in texts that bear his own name, the legacy is at once more diffuse and more pervasive, harder to document but deeper in its operation.

Part Four of this textbook undertakes the complex and rewarding task of tracing what happened to Razzaq's ideas in the decades after independence, how they were received, interpreted, applied, distorted, contested, celebrated, and contested again in the intellectual and political life of Bangladesh between 1971 and the present day. It examines the controversies that arose around his legacy, the institutional expressions of his influence, the specific domains of thought in which his contribution was most original and most consequential, and the continuing relevance of his intellectual framework to the challenges that Bangladesh and the broader South Asian region face in the twenty-first century.

This part also engages more directly than the previous three with the technical and disciplinary dimensions of Razzaq's thought: his philosophy of oriental studies and comparative civilizational analysis, his jurisprudential positions and their relationship to constitutional theory, his economic philosophy and its relevance to development questions, and the psychological dimensions of his intellectual personality. It does so in dialogue with recent developments in all of these fields, drawing on scholarship from 2022 through 2025 that has revisited Razzaq's contribution with the benefit of both historical distance and new theoretical frameworks.

A note of methodological honesty is appropriate here. The further one gets from Razzaq's own lifetime and the documented record of his conversations and lectures, the more one is dealing with interpretations of interpretations, with the memory of his influence rather than the direct record of his thought. Part Four is, in important respects, a study not just of Razzaq's ideas but of what his students and successors made of those ideas, what the Bangladeshi intellectual tradition has done with the legacy it inherited from him, and what genuine scholarly assessment can

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recover from beneath the layers of hagiography and mythology that inevitably accumulate around figures of great influence. The commitment to critical honesty that animated Razzaq's own intellectual practice demands nothing less.

Chapter One: The Nation Is Born and the Intellectual Must Reckon With It

1971 and the Problem of What Comes After

The achievement of independence in December 1971 was simultaneously a moment of extraordinary triumph and the beginning of an extraordinarily difficult set of questions. A nation had been born, at enormous cost, out of the struggle of a people for their right to govern themselves in accordance with their own cultural, linguistic, and political identity. But the birth of a nation is not the resolution of the questions that drove its struggle; it is the beginning of the work of answering them in institutional and practical terms. The question of what Bangladesh was to become, how it was to be governed, what kind of political institutions it was to build, what economic strategies it was to pursue, what cultural identity it was to cultivate: all of these questions, which had been sharpened by the independence struggle and which the struggle had given a certain emotional and political urgency, now had to be answered in the cold daylight of administrative reality.

Professor Abdur Razzaq was fifty-seven years old in December 1971. He was not, in the dramatic sense, a hero of the liberation war; he had not commanded troops or made rousing political speeches or organized resistance networks. He had done something quieter and, in the long run, more consequential: he had spent nearly four decades filling the minds of the people who did those things with the analytical frameworks, the historical depth, and the normative commitments that made it possible for them to understand what they were fighting for and why it mattered. Now, with independence achieved, those same people were in positions of political and institutional authority, and the quality of their thinking would determine the quality of the new state.

Razzaq's situation in the immediate post-independence period was one of peculiar honour and peculiar uncertainty. He was honoured as a founding intellectual, as a man whose ideas had contributed to the independence movement in ways that everyone acknowledged but that were difficult to specify precisely. He was consulted, visited, sought out by the political leaders who were now constructing the institutions of the new state. His students were in the cabinet, in the bureaucracy, in the judiciary, in the universities, in the press. His intellectual influence permeated the institutional landscape of the new Bangladesh in ways that were diffuse but real.

At the same time, the specific content of his analysis created a certain tension with the triumphalism of the independence moment. Razzaq was not a man who indulged in triumphalism. His structural analysis of the problems of postcolonial state-building, his insistence on the deep difficulties of democratic consolidation in conditions of institutional weakness and economic dependency, his warnings about the structural risks of military dominance and dynastic politics: none of these were messages that the euphoria of independence

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made easy to hear. A society that had just achieved independence at enormous cost, that had suffered genocidal violence and wanted to celebrate its survival and its victory, was not necessarily in the mood for the sober structural analysis that said the hardest work was still to come.

This tension between the celebratory mood of independence and the analytical sobriety of Razzaq's structural perspective was itself one of the defining features of his post-independence intellectual position. It is a tension that has been analysed, with varying degrees of nuance, by scholars who have studied his legacy, and it is one that tells us something important about the relationship between intellectual honesty and political culture in the specific context of a newly independent postcolonial state.

The Constitutional Moment and Razzaq's Invisible Presence

The drafting of the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh was, from a constitutional and political theory perspective, one of the most consequential intellectual exercises that the post-independence period produced. The constitution-makers faced the fundamental questions of constitutional design: what kind of government was Bangladesh to have, how was power to be distributed between the centre and the periphery, what rights were to be guaranteed to citizens, what fundamental principles were to guide state action, how was the relationship between the state and civil society to be structured.

These questions were not merely technical or legal; they were deeply philosophical, and the philosophical frameworks that the constitution-makers brought to them reflected, in significant measure, the intellectual formation they had received from their teachers, including Razzaq. The four fundamental principles of the 1972 Constitution, nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism, reflected a political philosophy that was recognizably consistent with the intellectual framework that Razzaq had developed through his teaching. The emphasis on democracy as the fundamental mode of political legitimacy, the recognition of socialism as the appropriate framework for economic organisation in conditions of postcolonial underdevelopment, the commitment to secularism as the basis for a pluralistic national identity, the assertion of Bengali nationalism as the distinctive cultural foundation of the new state: all of these principles can be traced, through the intellectual formation of the constitution-makers, to the analytical traditions within which Razzaq had worked.

This is not to claim that Razzaq was the author of the 1972 Constitution; he was not, and it would be inaccurate and misleading to describe his role in those terms. Rather, his contribution to the constitutional moment was of the kind that is characteristic of his entire intellectual career: not direct authorship but intellectual formation, the shaping of the frameworks through which the constitution-makers understood the problems they were addressing and the vocabulary in which they articulated their solutions.

The limitations of the 1972 Constitution, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this part, were also, in significant respects, the product of intellectual frameworks that either Razzaq had not fully transmitted or that the pressures of political circumstance had distorted. The concentration of executive power in the prime ministerial office, the weakness of federalist

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provisions for local government, the inadequacy of mechanisms for the accountability of political parties: these constitutional failures can be understood, from the perspective of Razzaq's analysis, as failures to apply the structural lessons that his teaching had identified as essential to democratic consolidation.

The intellectual history of the constitutional moment in Bangladesh is, therefore, at once a confirmation of Razzaq's influence and a demonstration of its limits. He influenced the philosophical orientation of the constitution-makers but could not guarantee that his more specific structural insights would be translated into constitutional provisions. The gap between philosophical orientation and structural design is one that political theory has always found difficult to bridge, and the 1972 Constitution was no exception to this general difficulty.

Chapter Two: Oriental Studies and the Architecture of Comparative Civilizational Thought

What Oriental Studies Meant to Razzaq

Among the many dimensions of Razzaq's intellectual work that have received insufficient systematic attention, his engagement with oriental studies is arguably the most significant and the most misunderstood. The phrase "oriental studies" is today burdened with the critical apparatus that Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) and the subsequent postcolonial critique of the orientalist tradition have generated. Said's argument that the academic study of the Orient was, at its core, a project of power/knowledge in which European scholars constructed the Orient as the exotic, irrational, despotic, and feminised Other of a rational, progressive, and masculine Occident has become so influential that it is difficult to discuss oriental studies without immediately engaging with the question of whether the discipline as a whole is irredeemably complicit in imperialism.

Razzaq's engagement with oriental studies pre-dates Said's critique and operates in a different intellectual register. For Razzaq, the study of the Orient was not a project of European knowledge about a passive and constructed subject; it was a project of self-knowledge, of understanding the civilizational traditions of South and East Asia from within those traditions, in their own terms, with the analytical tools developed by both European scholarship and the indigenous intellectual traditions of the region. His approach anticipated, in important ways, the kind of critical rethinking of oriental studies that postcolonial scholars like Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, and Gayatri Spivak would develop in the 1980s and 1990s, though his formulation was less polemical and more analytically precise than much of what came later.

The key to understanding Razzaq's approach to oriental studies lies in his conviction that civilizational comparison was not merely an academic exercise but an intellectual and political necessity. The project of building a new postcolonial nation required, in his view, a deep and accurate understanding of the civilizational resources that the nation could draw upon, not in order to revive a romantic golden age but in order to understand, with historical accuracy, what the colonial period had disrupted, what had survived, what had been transformed, and what was

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genuinely new. A nation that did not know its own civilizational history was a nation that could not make intelligent choices about its future.

This conviction drove Razzaq's reading across an extraordinarily wide range of texts in the history, philosophy, religion, literature, and political thought of South and East Asia. His library, which numbered in the thousands of volumes and which his nephew Abul Khair Litu carefully preserved after his death and has since been partially digitized, included works in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Bengali, and English on Islamic philosophy, Hindu philosophy, Buddhist thought, the intellectual traditions of China and Japan, the history of the Mughal Empire, the Ottoman political system, and the comparative sociology of Asian civilizations. This was not the library of an academic specialist in any narrow sense; it was the library of a man who had set himself the task of understanding the full range of human civilizational achievement in Asia and of thinking comparatively about what that achievement meant.

The Method of Civilizational Comparison

Razzaq's approach to civilizational comparison was grounded in what might be called a historicist empiricism. He was deeply suspicious of the kind of abstract philosophical generalization that constructs civilizational essences, that speaks of the eternal spirit of Islam or the fundamental character of Hindu civilization or the timeless wisdom of the East, as if civilizations were unchanging essences rather than historical processes in continuous evolution. At the same time, he was equally suspicious of the kind of reductive economic or social determinism that explained civilizational achievement entirely in terms of material conditions, ignoring the genuine role of ideas, values, and intellectual traditions in shaping the development of civilizations.

His method was comparative without being reductive. He was interested in understanding how specific historical circumstances, specific social structures, specific intellectual traditions, and specific material conditions had interacted to produce the distinctive cultural and political achievements of different civilizations. He was interested in the questions of why certain civilizations had developed certain institutional forms and not others, why certain intellectual traditions had flourished in certain places and periods and declined in others, why the relationship between religion, politics, and intellectual life had taken such different forms in different civilizations.

These questions, which might seem merely academic in their formulation, had immediate practical relevance in the context of postcolonial Bangladesh. If one wanted to understand, for example, what kind of relationship between religion and the state was appropriate for Bangladesh, one needed to understand the historical traditions of Islamic political thought, the specific ways in which Muslim societies had organised the relationship between religious authority and political power in different historical contexts, the reasons why certain models had been more successful than others, and what the specific conditions of a Muslim-majority Bengali society suggested about which models were appropriate for the present situation.

Razzaq's engagement with these questions was informed by his broad reading in Islamic history and philosophy, but it was not constrained by any orthodox position. He approached the Islamic

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intellectual tradition with the same critical respect that he brought to all intellectual traditions: taking it seriously as a genuine achievement of human thought while remaining willing to identify its limitations and to think about how it needed to be adapted to changed historical circumstances.

The Bengal-China Connection: A Neglected Dimension

One of the most interesting and least discussed dimensions of Razzaq's comparative civilizational thinking was his sustained engagement with Chinese history and philosophy. His library contained a substantial collection of works on Chinese history, Chinese political thought, and Chinese civilization more broadly, and his conversations with students frequently touched on the parallels and contrasts between the civilizational trajectories of South Asia and East Asia.

Razzaq's interest in China was not the interest of an enthusiast for Chinese communism or Maoism, though the success of the Chinese revolution in 1949 was certainly a significant intellectual event that he engaged with seriously. Rather, it was the interest of a comparative civilizational thinker who recognized in China a case study of enormous importance for understanding the relationship between imperial tradition, modernization, revolution, and national identity in the context of a great Asian civilization confronting the challenges of the modern world.

The specific parallels that Razzaq drew between the Chinese and South Asian experiences were multiple. Both China and South Asia had been great centres of civilizational achievement for millennia, with sophisticated philosophical, literary, scientific, and administrative traditions that had nothing to learn from Europe in terms of intellectual achievement and that Europe itself had, in many periods of history, looked to as sources of wisdom. Both had been subjected to the disruptions of European imperialism in the modern period, in ways that profoundly altered their social structures, their economic organisations, and their self-understanding. Both were grappling, in the post-independence and post-revolutionary period, with the fundamental question of how to relate their pre-modern civilizational traditions to the demands of modern economic and political organization.

The contrast between the Chinese and South Asian trajectories was equally instructive from Razzaq's analytical perspective. China had achieved its revolution through a movement of genuine mass mobilization that had successfully reorganized the entire Chinese social structure, eliminating the old landed elite and establishing a new form of political authority grounded in peasant and worker organisation. South Asia had achieved independence through a different process, one that had left much of the old social structure intact and had transferred political power primarily to the educated middle class without fundamentally reorganizing the economic and social relationships that underlay that structure.

The consequences of these different paths to independence were, for Razzaq, analytically significant. The Chinese path had achieved a more thorough transformation of social structure but at enormous human cost and through authoritarian methods that raised profound questions about the relationship between political transformation and human freedom. The South Asian

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path had been more humane but had left unresolved the fundamental social inequalities that posed long-term threats to the stability and the democratic quality of the independent states.

This analysis was, in its essentials, a sophisticated contribution to the comparative study of postcolonial state formation that anticipated by decades the kind of comparative analysis that political scientists like Samuel Huntington, Barrington Moore, and Guillermo O'Donnell were developing in the same period and that more recent scholars like Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson have pursued with even more systematic empirical documentation. That Razzaq was conducting this analysis without the apparatus of academic social science, through the medium of conversation and reflective reading rather than through formal research methodologies, is both remarkable and instructive about the limits of those methodologies.

Islamic Philosophy and the Oriental Mind

Razzaq's engagement with Islamic philosophy was one of the most sustained and most sophisticated dimensions of his intellectual work. It is important to understand what this engagement consisted of, because it is easy to misread it in either of two directions: as evidence of religious conservatism or as evidence of a purely academic interest unrelated to his political and social thinking. Neither reading would be accurate.

Razzaq's engagement with Islamic philosophy was that of a critical intellectual who took the tradition seriously precisely because he recognised its genuine intellectual achievement, its rigour, its range, and its continuing relevance to fundamental questions about the nature of knowledge, the basis of ethics, the organisation of political life, and the relationship between human reason and the divine order. He read the great philosophers of the Islamic tradition, from Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina through Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Ibn Khaldun to the later traditions of Sufi philosophy and Islamic modernism, not as a believer seeking confirmation of received truths but as an intellectual seeking to understand how some of the greatest minds in human history had thought about problems that were still not resolved.

His particular interest in Ibn Khaldun, the fourteenth-century Arab philosopher of history and social life, is especially instructive. Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah, his great prolegomenon to his universal history, represents one of the most original and most sophisticated contributions to social theory that any civilization has produced. Ibn Khaldun's analysis of the cyclical patterns of civilizational rise and decline, his theory of asabiyyah (group solidarity or social cohesion) as the driving force of political organisation, his account of the relationship between nomadic and settled societies, his analysis of the economic foundations of political power: all of these constituted a framework for the social scientific study of civilization that was, in many respects, more sophisticated than anything that European social theory had produced before the nineteenth century.

Razzaq's engagement with Ibn Khaldun was not merely historical; it was applied. He used Ibn Khaldun's framework, adapted to the conditions of twentieth-century South Asia, to think about the specific patterns of political change in the region, about the relationship between social cohesion and political stability, about the dynamics of the rise and decline of political movements and regimes. His analysis of Pakistani political failure, of the dynamics of the

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Bangladesh independence movement, and of the structural risks facing the new Bangladesh state all bore the marks of this engagement with Ibn Khaldunian social theory.

This is a dimension of his intellectual work that has received almost no systematic attention in the existing scholarship on his legacy, and it represents an important gap that future research needs to fill. The application of Ibn Khaldunian social theory to the analysis of South Asian political development is not merely of historical interest; it offers a genuinely different analytical framework from the mainstream social science traditions of Western Europe and North America, one that is rooted in an indigenous Asian intellectual tradition and that may illuminate dimensions of South Asian political dynamics that mainstream social science frameworks miss.

Razzaq and the Question of Orientalism

Given the enormous influence of Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) on the subsequent development of postcolonial studies and the widespread critique of the orientalist tradition in academic scholarship, it is necessary to situate Razzaq's engagement with oriental studies in relation to these developments. This is particularly important because, at first glance, Razzaq's enthusiastic engagement with the study of Asian civilizations might seem to make him a practitioner of the very tradition that Said condemned.

A more careful analysis reveals that Razzaq's practice of oriental studies was, in important respects, a form of orientalism's opposite. Said's critique was directed at a specific tradition of European scholarship in which the Orient was studied from the outside, by European scholars who brought to the study a set of assumptions about European superiority and Oriental inferiority that shaped their analysis even when they were unaware of it. The result was a body of knowledge that told more about European imperial self-understanding than about the actual civilizations being studied.

Razzaq's practice of oriental studies was, by contrast, an inside project. He was studying Asian civilizations as a member of one of those civilizations, as a Bengali Muslim intellectual who had grown up within the traditions he was studying and who brought to the study not the assumptions of imperial superiority but the critical curiosity of a man trying to understand his own civilizational heritage. His aim was not to confirm any pre-established conclusion about the Orient but to understand, with the maximum possible accuracy and depth, what the civilizational traditions of Asia actually contained and what they could contribute to the intellectual and political challenges of the present.

This does not mean that Razzaq's approach to oriental studies was free from all distortion or limitation. Every intellectual tradition has its blind spots, and Razzaq was no exception. His deep engagement with Islamic and Hindu philosophical traditions sometimes led him to underemphasize the internal diversity and the contradictions within those traditions, to treat them as more unified and more coherent than they actually were. His relatively limited engagement with the oral, folk, and popular traditions of Bengali culture, as opposed to the elite textual traditions that his library reflected, meant that his account of Bengali civilizational identity was more oriented toward the literate and the scholarly than toward the full range of human experience within the Bengal delta.

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These are legitimate criticisms, and they have been made, with varying degrees of specificity, by scholars who have studied his legacy from a postcolonial perspective. But they do not undermine the fundamental insight of his approach, which was that the study of Asian civilizations by Asian intellectuals, conducted with critical rigour and comparative breadth, was an intellectual and political necessity for postcolonial societies trying to understand themselves and their place in the world.

Chapter Three: The Epistemology of Silence - Why Razzaq Did Not Write, and What That Tells Us About His Philosophy of Knowledge

The Paradox Revisited and Deepened

The most persistent biographical puzzle about Professor Abdur Razzaq is also, on careful examination, the most philosophically interesting feature of his intellectual career. Why did a man of such evident intellectual power, such broad reading, such analytical acuity, such wide influence on the intellectual life of his nation, choose not to write? Why did a man who was capable of writing a sophisticated dissertation for Harold Laski at the London School of Economics, who was capable of delivering lectures of the analytical sophistication of Bangladesh: State of the Nation, who was clearly in command of the material for a substantial body of published scholarship, choose instead to circulate his ideas entirely through the medium of conversation, lecture, and personal encounter?

This question has been answered in various ways by those who knew him and by those who have studied his legacy. Some have pointed to perfectionism: Razzaq's standards were so high, they say, and his awareness of the limitations of his own work was so acute, that he could never bring himself to commit his ideas to print in a form that fell short of what he believed they deserved. Some have pointed to his temperament: he was, in the account of all who knew him, a man who found the formal requirements of academic publication uncongenial, who preferred the living dialogue of conversation to the fixed and therefore deadening form of the published text.

Some, less charitably, have suggested that his failure to publish was a kind of intellectual self-protection, a way of maintaining the mystique of the oracle whose wisdom is all the more powerful for being partially inaccessible. This is a cynical interpretation, and it does not do justice to the genuine warmth and generosity with which Razzaq shared his knowledge with anyone who came to him with genuine curiosity. But it is not entirely without foundation: the fact that his ideas could only be accessed through the mediation of students who had sat at his feet did give him a kind of intellectual authority that would have been harder to maintain if his ideas had been available in print, subject to the critical scrutiny of readers who had not been shaped by his personal presence.

But there is a deeper explanation, one that is more philosophically interesting and that connects Razzaq's practice of silence to the fundamental epistemological commitments of his intellectual framework. Razzaq did not believe that the transmission of genuine intellectual understanding was primarily a textual process. He believed that genuine understanding was inseparable from

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the personal relationship between a teacher and a student, that the kind of critical, contextual, responsive thinking he was trying to cultivate in his students could not be transmitted through the reading of a text but only through the living encounter of minds.

The Socratic Dimension

This belief connects Razzaq to a tradition of thought about the nature and transmission of knowledge that goes back to Plato's account of Socrates and that has been a persistent counter-tradition in Western and Eastern philosophy ever since. Plato, who wrote extensively about his teacher Socrates and about the philosophical method of Socratic dialogue, has Socrates argue, in several dialogues, that writing is an inferior medium for the transmission of genuine philosophical understanding. The argument, set out most fully in the Phaedrus, is that a written text is like a painting: it can only say the same thing to everyone who reads it, it cannot respond to questions, it cannot adapt its argument to the specific level of understanding and the specific confusions of the particular reader, and it therefore cannot achieve the kind of genuine intellectual engagement that genuine philosophical transmission requires.

Razzaq knew Plato's dialogues well, and his practice of conversational teaching is most plausibly interpreted as a deliberate and reflective choice to adopt the Socratic method rather than a failure to achieve the kind of systematic written exposition that would have been more conventional. The conversations described by Ahmed Sofa, Sardar Fazlul Karim, and others who recorded their encounters with Razzaq have precisely the character of Socratic dialogues: they begin with a question or an observation from the student, they develop through a process of Razzaq pressing the student to examine their assumptions, to think more carefully about what they actually mean, to consider the historical and comparative evidence bearing on their question, and they frequently end not with a definitive answer but with a more precisely formulated understanding of the complexity of the question.

This pedagogical practice was not merely a technique; it reflected a genuine philosophical position about the nature of knowledge and its transmission. Razzaq believed that genuine intellectual understanding was not a body of information that could be transmitted from one mind to another through a fixed medium but a capacity for thinking, a set of intellectual habits and analytical reflexes, that could only be developed through the practice of engaged critical inquiry. The teacher's role was not to deliver truths but to create the conditions in which the student's own capacity for critical thinking could develop and flourish.

This position has important implications for the evaluation of his legacy. If Razzaq was right that genuine intellectual understanding is not primarily a textual phenomenon but a personal and relational one, then the standard academic criteria for evaluating intellectual contribution, which are heavily weighted toward published scholarship, will systematically undervalue his contribution. The influence of a man whose primary medium was conversation and personal encounter cannot be adequately measured by counting the citations to his published works or the students who read his books, because his primary contribution was made through a medium that leaves no documentary trace of the kind that conventional academic evaluation can count.

The Epistemology of Oral Tradition

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Razzaq's choice of conversation and oral transmission over written publication places him in a specific and ancient epistemological tradition that is particularly important in the context of South Asian intellectual history. The great intellectual traditions of South Asia, both Hindu and Islamic, have placed enormous emphasis on the oral transmission of knowledge, on the relationship between guru and disciple, on the importance of the living teacher as the mediating presence through whom ancient wisdom is transmitted and adapted to present circumstances.

In the Hindu tradition, the concept of guru-shishya parampara, the lineage of teacher and disciple through which philosophical and spiritual knowledge is transmitted, has been the primary vehicle for the preservation and development of the major philosophical schools. The Vedas themselves were, for centuries, transmitted entirely orally, preserved with extraordinary precision through the cultivation of memory and the practice of recitation. The Upanishads, the great philosophical texts of the Hindu tradition, take the form of dialogues between teacher and student, reflecting the conviction that philosophical insight is generated through the encounter of minds rather than through solitary study.

In the Islamic tradition, the concept of silsila, the chain of transmission through which knowledge passes from teacher to student, has been fundamental to both legal and spiritual traditions. The hadith literature, the recorded sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is organised around the chains of transmission through which each saying was passed down, and the authority of a saying depends not just on its content but on the reliability of the chain of transmission through which it has reached us. The Sufi spiritual traditions are organized around the relationship between the Sheikh and the mureed (disciple), a relationship in which the transmission of spiritual understanding is understood to require direct personal contact and cannot be achieved through books alone.

Razzaq was steeped in both of these traditions, and his practice of oral teaching was a deliberate engagement with them, a decision to work within the older epistemological frameworks of South Asian intellectual life rather than to adopt uncritically the European model of knowledge transmission through published scholarship. This decision was itself a philosophical and political statement: an assertion that the intellectual traditions of South Asia had developed sophisticated approaches to the transmission of knowledge that were not merely primitive precursors to the modern European model but genuine alternatives with their own logic and their own advantages.

What the Silence Preserved

There is another dimension to Razzaq's silence that has received less attention but that is philosophically important. By not writing, he preserved a freedom of thought that the published author necessarily sacrifices. A published text commits its author to a specific formulation of ideas at a specific moment in time. It creates a record against which the author's subsequent thinking can be measured, and it gives critics a fixed target to engage with and to refute. It also creates a kind of intellectual proprietorship that can become constraining: once you have published a position, you have invested your intellectual reputation in defending it, and the social and professional pressures that push toward consistency with one's published positions can impede the genuine openness to revision that intellectual honesty requires.

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By not publishing, Razzaq remained free to revise his views without the public record of what he had previously said making that revision uncomfortable. His students reported that he was willing to say, when he had changed his mind on a question, that he had changed his mind, without apparent difficulty or embarrassment. This willingness to revise, to follow the argument wherever it led without being constrained by the need to defend previously published positions, was one of the qualities that made him such an effective teacher and such a valuable intellectual resource for those who consulted him. He could be, in the deepest sense, honest, because he had not committed himself to any published position that he had to protect.

This freedom of thought is a genuine intellectual virtue, and it is one that the academic publication system as it is currently organized makes difficult to cultivate. Academic careers depend on a publication record, and publication records depend on presenting one's ideas in a form sufficiently confident and definitive to pass peer review and to attract citations. The kind of genuine intellectual uncertainty, the willingness to say that one does not know, that the question is harder than it appears, that the evidence is insufficient to draw firm conclusions, that characterised Razzaq's conversational intellectual practice is not well rewarded by the academic publication system and is, in practice, discouraged by the incentive structure that system creates.

Razzaq's implicit critique of this system, made not through any polemical argument but through the simple practice of refusing to participate in it, is one of the most interesting dimensions of his intellectual legacy and one that remains relevant to contemporary debates about the nature and organisation of academic knowledge.

Chapter Four: The Reception of Razzaq's Ideas in the 1970s - Victory, Betrayal, and the First Crisis

The 1970s as a Decade of Intellectual Crisis

The 1970s were the most turbulent decade in Bangladesh's short history, and the intellectual life of the country reflected and responded to that turbulence in ways that shaped the subsequent development of Bangladeshi intellectual culture for decades. The decade began with the triumphant achievement of independence in December 1971, moved through the period of the Mujib government's increasingly authoritarian rule between 1972 and 1975, experienced the catastrophic assassination of Mujib and his family in August 1975, passed through a period of intense political instability and competing military factions in late 1975, and ended with the consolidation of military rule under Major General Ziaur Rahman, whose government was formally legitimized through elections in 1978 and 1979.

This extraordinary sequence of political events posed acute challenges to the intellectual tradition that Razzaq represented. The framework of democratic political analysis that his teaching had developed, with its emphasis on the importance of institutional design, the dangers of concentrated executive power, and the structural risks of military dominance, was being tested in real time in the most dramatic and painful possible ways. The intellectual students who had

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absorbed his analytical frameworks were watching, from positions of proximity, the failure of the political system that they had hoped independence would produce.

The Mujib government's move toward single-party rule, culminating in the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution in January 1975 and the establishment of the Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL) as the only legal political party, was a direct contradiction of the democratic principles that Razzaq's political analysis had identified as fundamental to genuine postcolonial self-governance. It represented precisely the kind of concentration of political power in the hands of a single party and a single leader that his structural analysis had identified as a pathology of South Asian political development.

The assassination of Mujib in August 1975, carried out by a group of military officers, represented the kind of military intervention in civilian political life that Razzaq's analysis had identified as the most dangerous structural risk facing the new Bangladesh state. The fact that the coup was initially welcomed by significant portions of the educated Bengali public, who had become deeply disillusioned with the authoritarian direction of the Mujib government, illustrated the complex and painful dynamics of democratic breakdown that Razzaq's framework had analysed: democratic institutions undermined by their own founders, military intervention initially welcomed as relief from authoritarian civilian rule, the gradual recognition that military governance was worse than the problem it had supposedly solved.

Razzaq's Response to the Political Crisis

Razzaq's personal response to the political crises of the 1970s was, characteristically, expressed through conversation rather than public statement. He continued to teach, to read, to engage with the students and public figures who sought him out, and to provide analytical frameworks for understanding what was happening. But his analysis of the 1970s political situation, as reconstructed from the accounts of those who spoke with him during this period, was sober, clear-sighted, and deeply uncomfortable for those who would have preferred a more consoling interpretation.

He appears to have recognised, and to have said with characteristic directness in private conversations, that the failures of the 1970s were not merely the result of individual moral failings by political leaders, though individual moral failings certainly played a role. They were structural failures, failures rooted in the specific conditions of postcolonial state formation in South Asia that his analysis had identified years earlier. The concentration of political authority in the person of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the subordination of party institutions to personal loyalty, the failure to build genuinely independent institutions of accountability, the inability to manage the economic crisis created by the devastation of the liberation war: all of these were, from Razzaq's perspective, predictable consequences of structural conditions that a more careful and more institutionally sophisticated approach to the construction of the new state might have mitigated.

This analysis was painful precisely because Mujib was Razzaq's most famous student, and the failure of the Mujib government was, in some measure, a failure of the political formation that Razzaq's teaching had contributed to. The distance between the intellectual analysis and the

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political reality that it illuminates is one of the most difficult experiences an intellectual can have, and Razzaq's engagement with it was, by all accounts, characterised by the same combination of analytical clarity and personal generosity that defined his intellectual practice in all circumstances.

The Emergence of Competing Intellectual Currents

The political crises of the 1970s accelerated the development of competing intellectual currents in Bangladeshi intellectual life, each of which related to Razzaq's legacy in different and sometimes conflicting ways. This diversification of intellectual life was, in important respects, a product of his influence: the generation of intellectuals he had trained was sufficiently capable of independent thought to develop their own frameworks rather than simply repeating their teacher's formulations.

The leftist current, represented by figures like Badruddin Umar and the various socialist and Marxist intellectual groups that emerged in the post-independence period, drew on elements of Razzaq's economic and political analysis while pushing them in a more explicitly class-based direction. Razzaq's analysis of colonial economic exploitation, his understanding of the structural inequalities produced by the colonial economic order, and his recognition of the need for fundamental economic transformation provided intellectual resources that the left could draw on, even though Razzaq himself was not a Marxist and was critical of the dogmatic application of Marxist categories to South Asian conditions.

The liberal democratic current, represented by figures like Rounaq Jahan, Rehman Sobhan, and the intellectual community associated with institutions like the Centre for Policy Dialogue, drew more directly on Razzaq's democratic political theory, his emphasis on the importance of institutional design, and his analysis of the structural conditions of democratic consolidation. This current found in Razzaq's framework a sophisticated analytical basis for the critique of both military rule and the democratic failures of civilian governments, and it used that framework to develop a sustained advocacy for institutional reform and democratic deepening.

The Islamist intellectual current, which grew in influence through the 1970s and 1980s partly as a consequence of the political changes that the military governments of Zia and Ershad facilitated, stood in more complex and more difficult relationship to Razzaq's legacy. Razzaq had engaged deeply and respectfully with Islamic intellectual tradition, and some Islamist intellectuals attempted to appropriate his authority for their own positions. But his commitment to secular democratic governance, his critique of religious political identity as a basis for nationalism, and his analysis of the failure of the Pakistan project all made such appropriation fundamentally misleading. The tensions between Razzaq's intellectual legacy and the Islamist political current remain one of the most contested dimensions of his posthumous reception.

Chapter Five: The Military Regimes and the Intellectual - Razzaq Under Zia and Ershad

The Structure of Military Intellectual Governance

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The two military regimes that dominated Bangladesh's political life between 1975 and 1990 - the regime of Ziaur Rahman (1975-1981) and the regime of Hussain Muhammad Ershad (1982-1990) - each developed distinctive relationships to the intellectual culture of the country, and each related to Razzaq's legacy in ways that reflect the broader dynamics of the relationship between intellectual life and authoritarian governance.

Ziaur Rahman, a liberation war hero who came to power through a series of coups and counter-coups in the chaotic aftermath of the 1975 assassination of Mujib, was not a man of intellectual depth, but he was a shrewd political calculator who understood the importance of intellectual legitimacy for his regime. His government made a number of moves that significantly altered the intellectual and cultural landscape of Bangladesh, including the removal of secularism from the constitution's fundamental principles, the addition of references to Allah in the constitution's preamble, the rehabilitation of political parties that had been banned for collaboration with Pakistan during the liberation war, and the deliberate cultivation of an alternative national mythology that downplayed the Bengali cultural dimensions of the independence movement in favour of a more Islamic and more narrowly political framing.

These moves were, from the perspective of Razzaq's intellectual framework, deeply retrograde. The removal of secularism from the constitutional framework struck at the heart of his analysis of what Bangladesh's national identity required. The rehabilitation of collaborationist political forces contradicted his understanding of the liberation movement's significance. The alternative national mythology represented a fundamental distortion of the historical analysis that he had developed through decades of careful study.

But Zia's regime did not directly confront Razzaq or attempt to suppress his influence. By the mid-1970s, Razzaq was a National Professor, an institution of Bangladeshi intellectual life too venerable and too widely respected to be attacked without significant political cost. The regime's approach was rather one of attempting to create an alternative intellectual culture, one that celebrated different values and drew on different historical narratives, while allowing the existing intellectual tradition to continue on the margins.

This marginalization by alternative construction rather than by direct suppression is a more sophisticated form of intellectual governance than outright censorship, and it was, in some respects, more effective. By funding institutions, supporting publications, and patronizing intellectuals who presented the version of Bangladeshi identity that the regime wanted to promote, Zia's government shifted the centre of gravity of the public intellectual culture without having to silence its critics. The critics, including those who drew on Razzaq's analytical framework, continued to write and to speak, but the resources and the audiences were concentrated elsewhere.

Ershad and the Islamization of Public Culture

The Ershad regime (1982-1990) went further in the direction that Zia had pioneered. Its formal adoption of Islam as the state religion of Bangladesh in 1988, through the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, represented the most significant single constitutional change from the secular democratic framework of the 1972 Constitution. It was a change that had profound implications

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for the intellectual and cultural life of the country, and it stood in direct contradiction to the analysis of Bangladesh's national identity and cultural heritage that Razzaq's intellectual framework had developed.

The decision to make Islam the state religion was not merely a symbolic gesture; it was a claim about the nature of the Bangladeshi national identity and about the appropriate relationship between religion and the state in Bangladesh. It asserted, against the secular democratic tradition that Razzaq represented, that Bangladesh's national identity was fundamentally religious rather than linguistic-cultural, and that the appropriate basis for the state's political authority was Islamic rather than democratic.

This assertion directly contradicted one of the core elements of Razzaq's analysis of Bengali Muslim identity. As Part Three of this textbook discussed, Razzaq had argued consistently that the Bengali Muslim identity was not adequately captured by either pure religious identification or pure secular nationalism, that it was a complex historical formation in which Bengali linguistic and cultural identity and Islamic religious tradition had been in continuous interaction, and that a political framework that privileged one at the expense of the other did violence to the genuine complexity of what Bangladesh was.

The academic and intellectual response to the Ershad regime's Islamization project, while not primarily organized around Razzaq's name, drew heavily on the analytical frameworks that his teaching had established. The critique of state religion as a violation of Bangladesh's foundational constitutional principles, the argument that secularism was essential to the protection of religious minorities and the maintenance of social cohesion in a diverse society, the insistence that Bengali national identity was grounded in language and culture rather than religion: all of these positions reflected the intellectual framework that Razzaq had developed, and the intellectuals who articulated them were, in many cases, his students or the students of his students.

Intellectual Resistance and Its Costs

The intellectual resistance to the military regimes of the 1970s and 1980s was not without costs. Academics who spoke too openly against the government faced the possibility of professional consequences, of removal from their positions, of denial of promotion or of research opportunities, of harassment by state security services. The Bangladesh that emerged from the liberation war was not a society in which intellectual freedom was reliably protected, and the military regimes were not inclined to tolerate sustained intellectual opposition.

Razzaq himself, by virtue of his age, his status as National Professor, and the breadth and depth of respect that he commanded across political lines, was largely protected from direct political pressure during this period. But younger intellectuals who drew on his framework were more vulnerable, and the chilling effect of political pressure on academic life was real and damaging.

The courage of those intellectuals who maintained their critical positions under the military regimes, who continued to write and speak in defence of democratic values and secular constitutional principles in the face of government pressure, deserves recognition as an important

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dimension of the history of Bangladeshi intellectual life. They were drawing on the intellectual resources that Razzaq's teaching had provided, and they were demonstrating in their own practice the kind of intellectual courage and integrity that his example embodied.

Chapter Six: The Book That Arrived Seventy-Two Years Late - "Political Parties in India" and Its Reception

The Extraordinary Story of a Delayed Publication

The publication in January 2022 of Political Parties in India, Razzaq's doctoral thesis completed for the London School of Economics in approximately 1950, was one of the most significant events in the recent history of Bangladeshi intellectual culture. The story of this publication is itself a small but remarkable chapter in the intellectual history of Bangladesh, and it illuminates in a particularly vivid way the paradoxes and complexities of Razzaq's intellectual legacy.

Razzaq had completed the dissertation under Harold Laski's supervision between 1945 and 1950. When Laski died in March 1950, Razzaq continued to work on the thesis under the supervision of W.H. Morris-Jones, another distinguished political scientist at the LSE. By the accounts of those who have examined the history of the dissertation, Razzaq was close to completing all the requirements for the doctorate when, in July 1950, he left London and returned to Dhaka without collecting the degree. The precise reasons for this inexplicable departure have never been fully documented, and they remain one of the biographical mysteries that the existing scholarship has not resolved.

The dissertation itself, a typescript of approximately two hundred pages, was preserved in the archives of the LSE and in a personal copy that Razzaq retained. For decades, it existed in a kind of liminal state: known about but not read by the broader intellectual public, discussed and referenced in footnotes and conversations but never directly engaged with in published scholarship. Its existence was known to Razzaq's students, but its content was accessible only to those who could arrange to examine the typescript.

The first scholar to locate and read the dissertation in a systematic way was Professor Rounaq Jahan, one of Razzaq's most distinguished students and a political scientist of international reputation. She discovered a reference to it in the footnotes of a work by Khaled bin Sayeed, a Canadian political scientist of Pakistani origin who had studied South Asian politics. She subsequently arranged to read the full dissertation and was, by her own account, deeply impressed by its quality and its continuing relevance. It was she who wrote the foreword to the 2022 published edition, and her description of the experience of reading it as feeling more like a book than a thesis captures something important about the ambition and the quality of Razzaq's intellectual engagement with the material.

The book was edited by Ahrar Ahmad, a professor emeritus at Black Hills State University in the United States and the director general of the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation. Ahmad's work of editing and preparation was itself a significant scholarly contribution, providing the

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historical and biographical context necessary for a contemporary reader to understand the dissertation's significance and to situate it within the intellectual context in which it was written.

The Content and Its Significance

The book's full title is Political Parties in India, but as the editor and several commentators have noted, this title is somewhat misleading about the scope and ambition of the work. The dissertation began with a focus on political parties as formal organizations but evolved into something much broader: an exploration of the social, economic, and intellectual history of nineteenth and early twentieth century India that examines the conditions out of which organized political life emerged.

The central thesis of the work is that political parties in colonial India did not drive the popular political movements of the period but were themselves shaped by those movements. The political organisations, including the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, emerged from and were formed by the broader social, economic, and intellectual changes taking place in colonial India, rather than being the prime movers of those changes. This argument challenged a kind of political history that focuses primarily on the decisions of political leaders and party organisations, pointing instead to the deeper social and economic conditions that determined what those organisations could do and what they could not.

Razzaq's argument developed through a careful analysis of the exercise of power in colonial India and the way in which changes in the manner of that exercise created new political possibilities and new political actors. He examined the role of the non-official European community in shaping colonial political culture, the emergence of an indigenous political middle class and its complex relationship to both colonial power and the broader Indian population, the development of the press as a medium for the articulation of political views and the formation of political opinion, and the gradual development of constitutional provisions that gave organised political activity a formal channel.

The argument about the increasing distancing between Hindu and Muslim communities in the context of competition among the educated middle classes for political and economic advancement was one of the most prescient and most carefully argued elements of the dissertation. Razzaq traced the development of communal political identities not to ancient religious antagonism or to the essential incompatibility of Hindu and Islamic civilization but to the specific circumstances of colonial educational policy, employment competition, and political organization that had made communal identity increasingly salient as a basis for political mobilization.

This argument, if it had been published in 1950 when the dissertation was written, would have been a significant contribution to the emerging debate about the causes and consequences of the partition of India. Published in 2022, it reads as a remarkable anticipation of the kind of analysis that historians like Mushirul Hasan, Faisal Devji, and Ayesha Jalal would develop in the 1980s and 1990s, based on more extensive archival research but reaching conclusions that are broadly consistent with Razzaq's argument.

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The 2022 Book Launch and the Intellectual Debate It Generated

The launch of Political Parties in India in January 2022, held at the Bengal Shilpalay in Dhaka, was a significant public intellectual event. The speakers included some of the most distinguished figures in Bangladeshi intellectual and public life, and the discussions at the launch event and in the subsequent commentary and review literature provide a valuable window into the current state of Razzaq's reception in Bangladeshi intellectual culture.

Professor Rounaq Jahan's observations at the launch were particularly significant. She noted that Razzaq had believed there was no genuinely democratic political party in India, meaning that the political parties of colonial India had not developed the internal democratic structures, the genuine popular accountability, and the commitment to the public interest over factional advantage that genuine democratic parties required. Instead, the parties had made the issue of gaining power and keeping others out of power a matter that their leadership treated as absolutely paramount, subordinating everything else to the imperatives of the power struggle.

The relevance of this observation to contemporary Bangladesh was immediately and explicitly noted at the launch. What Razzaq had written about the political parties of colonial India in 1950 described with uncomfortable accuracy the political parties of contemporary Bangladesh in 2022. The dynastic concentration of power in the major parties, the subordination of party institutions to personal and family loyalty, the treatment of political power as a matter of existential competition between rival factions: all of these characteristics of contemporary Bangladeshi political culture were anticipated in Razzaq's analysis of their historical antecedents.

A more critical assessment of the book was offered by some scholars who noted that Razzaq's analysis, while insightful in many respects, shared some of the limitations of the Cambridge School of Indian history, a tradition of historiography associated with scholars like Anil Seal and John Gallagher that emphasised the role of elite competition for scarce resources in driving Indian political development. This approach, critics argued, tended to downplay the genuine ideological commitments of political actors, the role of mass movements and popular consciousness in shaping political development, and the specific ways in which colonialism itself shaped the political possibilities available to Indian political actors.

This criticism, articulated in academic commentary following the book's publication, is a legitimate one, and it identifies a genuine limitation of the analytical framework that Razzaq had adopted. His emphasis on the structural conditions of political development and the material interests of political actors was an important corrective to the kind of great-man political history that attributed everything to the decisions of individual leaders, but it may have underemphasized the genuine role of ideas, values, and popular consciousness in shaping political outcomes.

The Controversy About the Mystery of the Unfinished Degree

One dimension of the 2022 publication that generated significant discussion was the renewed attention it brought to the mystery of why Razzaq had left London in July 1950 without completing his degree. The various explanations that have been offered for this decision,

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perfectionism, homesickness, impatience with academic bureaucracy, personal reasons that have not been documented, all remain speculative, and none is entirely satisfying.

Salimullah Khan, one of Razzaq's most interesting intellectual successors and a scholar of considerable sophistication, offered a provocative interpretation at the 2022 book launch. He suggested that Razzaq's departure from London before completing his degree might be understood as a deliberate rejection of the European academic apparatus, a refusal to accept the authority of European institutions to certify the value of his intellectual contribution. This interpretation connects Razzaq's unexplained departure to the broader pattern of his career, characterised by a consistent refusal to seek or accept the institutional markers of status and recognition.

Khan's interpretation, while interesting and suggestive, is necessarily speculative, and it may be giving too much credit to a decision that was, at least in part, simply inexplicable even to those who knew Razzaq best. But it raises an important question about the relationship between Razzaq's intellectual practice and the institutional frameworks within which academic knowledge is produced and validated, a relationship that he clearly found deeply problematic and that his career can be read as a sustained implicit critique of.

Chapter Seven: Razzaq's Jurisprudential Vision - Law, Justice, and the Postcolonial State

The Intellectual Foundation of His Legal Philosophy

Professor Abdur Razzaq was not a trained lawyer in the technical sense, but his engagement with questions of legal philosophy, constitutional theory, and jurisprudence was among the most sophisticated dimensions of his intellectual contribution. His approach to law was grounded in the historical analysis of how legal systems had developed, how they related to the social structures and political arrangements within which they operated, and what they could and could not achieve in conditions of postcolonial state formation.

His starting point was the recognition that law was not a neutral technical system but a social institution embedded in specific historical, cultural, and political conditions. The colonial legal system that Bangladesh inherited from the British Raj was not a universal system of justice but a specific system of rules designed to serve specific colonial purposes, to protect property rights defined in colonial terms, to maintain social hierarchies that suited colonial governance, and to administer a subject population in ways that served imperial interests. The task of postcolonial jurisprudence was not simply to continue operating this inherited system but to transform it in ways that served the genuine interests of the independent nation.

This was not a simple or straightforward task, and Razzaq's analysis of its difficulty drew on his deep knowledge of legal history. He was familiar with the major traditions of Western legal philosophy, from the natural law tradition through legal positivism to the sociological jurisprudence of Roscoe Pound and the legal realism of the American tradition. He was equally

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familiar with the traditions of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and with the specific history of how Islamic legal traditions had interacted with colonial legal systems in South Asia.

The Relationship Between Islamic Law and Democratic Governance

One of the most complex and most consequential dimensions of Razzaq's jurisprudential thought was his analysis of the relationship between Islamic law and democratic governance in the context of a Muslim-majority state like Bangladesh. This was not merely an academic question; it was one of the central political questions facing the new Bangladeshi state, and the way it was answered would shape the constitutional framework, the law of personal status, the rights of religious minorities, and the relationship between state authority and religious authority.

Razzaq's position on this question was nuanced and, as with so many of his positions, not easily captured in any simple formula. He rejected both of the simplistic positions that dominated the public debate. He rejected the position of Islamic conservatives who argued that Bangladesh, as a Muslim-majority state, was obligated to implement the classical fiqh as its legal system. He equally rejected the position of secular ideologues who argued that Islamic legal traditions had no legitimate place in the public life of a modern state.

His actual position was something more historically sophisticated and politically more productive. He argued that the Islamic legal tradition, like all living legal traditions, had developed in specific historical circumstances and had addressed specific historical problems. The classical fiqh was the product of the intellectual achievement of jurists working in the seventh through fifteenth centuries to develop a systematic legal framework for Muslim communities in conditions that were radically different from those of twentieth-century postcolonial Bangladesh. The appropriate response to this historical specificity was not the wholesale rejection of the Islamic legal tradition or its wholesale application without reference to changed circumstances, but the kind of ijtihad, the exercise of independent legal reasoning, that the tradition itself authorized as the appropriate method for dealing with new situations.

This argument had several important implications. It implied that the relationship between Islamic law and modern democratic governance was not a contradiction or an impossibility but a historical challenge that the intellectual resources of the Islamic tradition itself were capable of addressing. It implied that the relevant question was not whether Bangladesh was an Islamic state or a secular state but what kind of institutional arrangements would allow the Muslim-majority population of Bangladesh to live according to their religious values and commitments while also protecting the rights of religious minorities and maintaining the democratic political framework that the liberation struggle had established.

These implications pointed toward a form of constitutional pluralism, in which different legal frameworks were recognized for different domains of social life, with democratic constitutional law governing the public sphere and religious law governing the personal domain, a model that has been articulated more fully in recent scholarship under the labels of legal pluralism and constitutional accommodation.

Razzaq and the 1972 Constitution: A Jurisprudential Analysis

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Razzaq's contribution to the constitutional jurisprudence of the 1972 Constitution was, as with so much of his contribution, made through the intellectual formation of the constitution-makers rather than through direct authorship. But it is possible to identify the specific jurisprudential dimensions of his influence through a careful reading of the constitutional text and its subsequent interpretation.

The 1972 Constitution's commitment to secularism, understood not as the absence of religion from public life but as the equal treatment by the state of all religious communities and the prohibition of the use of religion for political purposes, reflected Razzaq's analysis of the relationship between religious identity and democratic political community. His argument that Bangladesh's national identity required a form of political secularism that protected religious diversity while affirming Bengali cultural identity found its constitutional expression in the secular provisions of the 1972 framework.

The constitution's commitment to democracy as the fundamental mode of political legitimacy, expressed not only in the formal provisions for elections and representative institutions but in the broader framework of fundamental rights and constitutional review, reflected the democratic theory that Razzaq had developed through his decades of teaching. The specific institutional provisions for judicial review of legislation, for the protection of fundamental rights, and for the independence of the judiciary reflected the importance that his analysis placed on institutional mechanisms of accountability.

The weaknesses of the 1972 Constitution, which were identified by its critics at the time and which subsequent political developments made painfully apparent, can also be illuminated by reference to Razzaq's jurisprudential framework. The excessive concentration of executive power in the prime ministerial office, the absence of effective mechanisms for the internal democracy of political parties, the inadequacy of provisions for the decentralization of power to local government: all of these weaknesses reflected failures to translate Razzaq's structural analysis of democratic preconditions into specific constitutional provisions.

The Legal Tradition of Bengal: Customary Law and the State

One dimension of Razzaq's jurisprudential thinking that has received insufficient attention is his engagement with the legal traditions of the Bengal delta itself, the customary and informal legal systems through which the rural population of Bengal had governed their social relationships for centuries before the imposition of colonial law. These traditions, rooted in the specific ecological and social conditions of life in the delta, represented a form of legal wisdom that was neither formally Islamic nor British-derived but that had developed organically from the social practices of a specific people in a specific place.

Razzaq's interest in these customary traditions reflected his broader conviction that genuine legal understanding required historical depth and cultural sensitivity, that a legal framework that was appropriate for Bangladesh needed to be rooted in the actual legal culture of its population rather than imposed from above by either colonial administrators or postcolonial state-builders. This position anticipated the kind of legal anthropological and comparative law scholarship that has grown significantly since the 1980s, with scholars like Tamir Moustafa, Balakrishnan Rajagopal,

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and Upendra Baxi developing sophisticated frameworks for understanding the relationship between formal legal systems and the informal legal cultures within which those systems are embedded.

The practical implications of this position for Bangladesh's legal development were significant. A legal system that was genuinely responsive to the legal needs and legal culture of the Bangladeshi population needed to engage with the customary legal traditions of the rural majority, not simply to apply the colonial inheritance without modification. This engagement was not about romanticizing pre-colonial legal traditions or about rejecting modern legal values, but about understanding what the actual population needed from the legal system and how the legal system could be made genuinely accessible and genuinely responsive to those needs.

Chapter Eight: Economic Philosophy in Depth - Razzaq, Development, and the Bengal Delta

The Critique of Conventional Development Economics

Razzaq's engagement with economic questions was, by the standards of academic economics, unorthodox. He was not a practitioner of econometrics, did not engage in the formal modelling of economic relationships, and did not produce the kind of technical economic analysis that dominates the academic journals. But his economic thinking was, at a deeper level, more fundamental than much of what passes for economic analysis, because it engaged with the basic assumptions and the historical presuppositions that technical economic models typically take for granted.

His critique of conventional development economics began with a historical argument. The development economics that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s as a distinct subdiscipline, associated with figures like W. Arthur Lewis, Ragnar Nurkse, and Gunnar Myrdal, was, despite its genuine intellectual achievements, a discipline that carried within it a number of assumptions inherited from the specific historical experience of European industrialization. It tended to treat the European path to economic development as the normal path, to see the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America as simply being at an earlier stage of the same developmental journey, and to prescribe policy interventions designed to accelerate the movement along this path.

Razzaq was deeply critical of this framework, though his criticism was not the kind of radical rejection that later dependency theorists and postcolonial economists would offer. His criticism was more historically specific: he argued that the conditions of the Bengal delta were so different from the conditions of European industrialization that the application of European developmental frameworks to Bengal would inevitably produce distorted results. The specific ecological character of the delta, its relationship to the river system, its agricultural traditions, its pattern of small-scale manufacturing and trade, its social structure: all of these features of Bengali economic life needed to be understood in their own terms, not as backward versions of European conditions.

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The Bengal Delta as Economic Subject

The Bengal delta is one of the most ecologically distinctive regions in the world. Formed by the confluence of three great river systems, the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, and the Meghna, and their countless tributaries, it is a landscape of extraordinary natural dynamism, in which the boundaries between land and water are never fixed, in which the deposition of silt annually renews the fertility of the soil, in which floods are not disasters but part of the ecological cycle that makes life possible, and in which the human communities have developed over millennia a complex and sophisticated set of adaptations to this distinctive environment.

Razzaq's economic thinking insisted on taking this ecological specificity seriously, not as local colour or as background to the real economic analysis but as the fundamental condition that any adequate economic analysis of Bangladesh must take as its starting point. He argued that the development strategies appropriate to the Bengal delta could not be derived from general models but had to be worked out in specific engagement with the particular ecological, social, and historical conditions of the region.

This argument had several specific implications. It meant that the large-scale infrastructure projects, the dams, the embankments, the drainage systems, that development planners typically proposed for flood management in Bangladesh might be counterproductive, disrupting the ecological processes that sustained the agricultural fertility of the delta while providing only illusory protection against the inevitable dynamism of the river system. It meant that the appropriate model for agricultural development in Bangladesh was not the Green Revolution model of high-yielding varieties, chemical inputs, and mechanized production, developed primarily for the ecological conditions of South and Southeast Asia's irrigated plains, but something more adapted to the specific conditions of the delta. It meant that the small-scale manufacturing and trading traditions of Bengali economic life, which conventional development economics tended to dismiss as inefficient and backward, were in fact sophisticated adaptations to specific ecological and social conditions that deserved to be understood and built upon rather than simply swept aside.

These arguments anticipate, in important ways, the kind of ecological economics that has developed significantly since the 1980s, from the work of Herman Daly and Amartya Sen through to the more recent contributions of Kate Raworth and the environmental economists who have studied the specific economic challenges of delta regions and small island developing states. The connection between Razzaq's economic intuitions and the contemporary ecological economics literature has not been systematically explored, and it represents an important opportunity for research that could both illuminate the contemporary relevance of his thinking and provide historical depth to a contemporary disciplinary debate.

Razzaq and the Critique of Import Substitution Industrialization

The dominant development strategy of the 1950s and 1960s in Asia, Africa, and Latin America was import substitution industrialization (ISI): the deliberate use of tariff barriers, state subsidies, and directed investment to develop domestic manufacturing industries that could substitute for imported goods, reducing dependence on foreign exchange and building a domestic industrial

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base. This strategy was applied in Bangladesh in the early independence period, as the Mujib government attempted to develop a state-led industrialization strategy drawing on the model that India had followed under Nehru.

Razzaq's critique of ISI as applied in Bangladesh was grounded in his historical analysis of Bengali economic tradition and in his understanding of the specific conditions of the new Bangladeshi state. He argued, in the discussions that his students have recorded, that the ISI model was fundamentally mismatched to the conditions of Bangladesh for several reasons.

First, the ISI model presupposed a degree of state institutional capacity, a bureaucracy capable of making effective investment decisions, enforcing quality standards, managing large industrial enterprises, and collecting and deploying the tax revenues necessary to finance state-led investment, that the newly independent Bangladeshi state simply did not possess. The colonial inheritance had not produced an adequate developmental state apparatus; it had produced an administrative system geared to revenue extraction and order maintenance rather than to economic transformation.

Second, the ISI model presupposed a domestic market large enough to support efficient domestic production at meaningful scale, which Bangladesh's impoverished population, with its extremely low per capita income, did not provide for most categories of manufactured goods. The protection of infant industries through tariff barriers made sense when the protected industries could eventually achieve the scale necessary for efficient production; in Bangladesh's conditions, many protected industries remained permanently inefficient because the domestic market was too small to support them at efficient scale.

Third, and most fundamentally from Razzaq's perspective, the ISI model was premised on a vision of economic development as industrialization in the European sense, the transformation of an agricultural society into an industrial one, that was not necessarily appropriate to the specific ecological and social conditions of Bangladesh. The alternative he suggested, without articulating it in the explicit policy terms that would have made it easy to implement, was an approach grounded in the strengths of the Bengali economic tradition: the development of sophisticated small-scale manufacturing, the expansion of trade and commerce building on the historical commercial traditions of the delta, the cultivation of high-quality artisanal production for export markets, and the careful management of the agricultural system in a way that preserved the ecological conditions of its fertility.

This alternative vision is, in retrospect, closer to the actual development trajectory that Bangladesh has followed since the 1980s, with the garment industry and remittance-based development playing roles not entirely unlike the small-scale manufacturing and commercial trading roles that Razzaq's analysis suggested. The fact that Bangladesh has achieved remarkable development outcomes over the past three decades, outcomes that have surprised many development economists who predicted continued stagnation, is in some measure a confirmation of the analytical insight underlying Razzaq's critique of conventional development economics.

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Chapter Nine: The Psychology of Gyantapas - Asceticism, Intellectual Passion, and the Human Dimensions

The Archetype of the Ascetic Intellectual

The epithet "Gyantapas" that Razzaq acquired during his lifetime and that has become the primary way in which his memory is honoured and institutionalized captures something essential about his intellectual personality. The Sanskrit compound (gyaan, knowledge, and tapas, austerity or ascetic heat) invokes a specifically South Asian archetype: the figure of the ascetic who subjects himself or herself to rigorous discipline in pursuit of wisdom, who renounces comfort and worldly advancement in the service of understanding, and who, through that renunciation and that discipline, achieves a quality of insight that the more comfortable and more distracted cannot attain.

Razzaq embodied this archetype in ways that were both psychologically specific and philosophically significant. His refusal of professional advancement, remaining a lecturer throughout his career while his peers sought and obtained professorships and administrative positions, was not merely personal modesty or institutional quirk; it was a deliberate choice that reflected his understanding of what intellectual integrity required. He believed that the pursuit of institutional status and professional advancement was fundamentally incompatible with the kind of free and disinterested inquiry that genuine intellectual achievement demanded. A mind focused on its position in institutional hierarchies could not, in his view, be simultaneously focused on the honest pursuit of truth.

His relationship to money and material comfort was similarly ascetic. He lived simply, spending his resources primarily on books and on hospitality to the students and visitors who came to his home to talk. His famous library, which became one of the greatest private intellectual collections in Bangladesh, was not an investment or a display of affluence; it was the working tool of a man who needed access to the full range of human intellectual achievement in order to think adequately about the questions that preoccupied him.

The Laughter That Concealed and Revealed

One of the most frequently mentioned features of Razzaq's conversational personality is his laughter. Multiple accounts, from those who knew him across different periods and different social contexts, emphasize the particular quality of his laughter: generous, infectious, often appearing at unexpected moments, and carrying within it a kind of intellectual commentary that was sometimes as sharp as anything he said explicitly.

Rehman Sobhan's account at the 2022 book launch is particularly telling. He described how conversations about Razzaq's thesis were frequently greeted by Razzaq himself with laughter, a laughter that Sobhan was uncertain whether to interpret as discouragement or as a peculiarly indirect form of invitation to engage with the material. This uncertainty about the meaning of Razzaq's laughter is itself significant: it was not a simple social signal but a complex communicative act that required interpretation, that placed the burden of interpretation on the

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interlocutor, and that thereby maintained a kind of intellectual distance while simultaneously creating a kind of intellectual intimacy.

The psychologically sophisticated use of laughter as an intellectual tool has a long tradition in both Eastern and Western thought. The Zen masters of the Japanese Buddhist tradition used laughter and apparently irrational behaviour as devices for disrupting the habitual patterns of thought that prevented genuine insight. The Socratic irony of Plato's dialogues is, in many passages, a form of intelligent play with the expectations of the interlocutor, a way of saying something true by appearing not to take it seriously. The Islamic tradition of the fool or jester who speaks uncomfortable truths through the medium of comic disguise is another expression of the same insight.

Razzaq's laughter operated in a similar register. It was a way of saying things that direct statement would make too heavy, of indicating intellectual positions without the kind of authoritative pronouncement that would foreclose the student's own intellectual engagement with the question, of maintaining a kind of epistemic humility even about his own most deeply held convictions.

The Paradox of Influence Without Authority

The most psychologically interesting paradox of Razzaq's intellectual personality is the combination of enormous influence with a deliberate rejection of formal authority. He influenced more people, more profoundly, than almost any other Bangladeshi intellectual of the twentieth century. His former students included members of parliament, cabinet ministers, judges, journalists, economists, and intellectuals whose work and whose political decisions shaped the development of Bangladesh in fundamental ways. And yet he exercised this influence without ever seeking or accepting the institutional markers of authority: the professorship, the administrative positions, the formal leadership roles that typically translate intellectual eminence into institutional power.

This paradox can be understood from several different psychological perspectives. From a psychodynamic perspective, his rejection of institutional authority might be understood as a form of identification with the outsider position, with the prophet rather than the priest, with the man whose authority comes from truth rather than from office. From a sociological perspective, it might be understood as a sophisticated understanding of the specific kind of authority that was available to him: the authority of the sage, which depended precisely on its independence from institutional power, and which would have been undermined rather than enhanced by the acceptance of institutional positions.

From a philosophical perspective, it reflects a deeply considered position about the relationship between institutional power and intellectual integrity. Institutional authority is always conditional: the professor who holds a chair is subject to the expectations and the conventions of the academic institution that employs him, the civil servant who holds office is subject to the directives of the government that appointed him, the judge who holds a judicial position is subject to the law as interpreted by higher courts. Razzaq's refusal of institutional authority was a

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refusal to accept these conditions, a claim to the kind of unconditional freedom of thought that is only available to those who have no institutional position to protect.

Chapter Ten: The Controversies - Where Razzaq's Legacy Was and Is Contested

The Myth and the Man: The Problem of Hagiography

The most persistent intellectual controversy surrounding Razzaq's legacy is not about the specific positions he held but about the nature of the relationship between the man and the mythology that has developed around him. The academic commentary on the 2022 publication of Political Parties in India was unusually frank about this problem, with several scholars noting that the reception of the book at its launch was more focused on celebrating the myth of Razzaq than on engaging seriously with the content of the work.

This is a legitimate and important criticism. Any intellectual figure of sufficient eminence eventually becomes, in the eyes of his admirers, more myth than man, and the mythologizing process tends to serve the psychological needs of the admirers more than the intellectual needs of the tradition they claim to be continuing. The myth of the wise teacher whose every utterance was profound, whose very silences were meaningful, whose personality was perfectly integrated around a set of timeless intellectual virtues, is a psychological construct that tells us what we want a great intellectual to be rather than what any actual human being, however gifted, actually was.

The mythology surrounding Razzaq has this character in some of its expressions. The tendency to attribute to him not just great intelligence and wide learning but something approaching wisdom in an almost mystical sense, the reluctance of some of his admirers to engage critically with the limitations and the errors in his analysis, the treatment of his recorded conversational observations as if they were oracular pronouncements rather than the tentative formulations of a man thinking aloud: these are features of the Razzaq mythology that critical scholarship needs to engage with honestly.

At the same time, the critical response to the mythology should not lose sight of the genuine intellectual achievement that underlies it. The mythology exists because the achievement was real, because the influence was real, because the intellectual formation that Razzaq provided to generations of students was genuinely consequential for the development of Bangladesh. The task of critical scholarship is to recover the real achievement from beneath the mythology, to understand what Razzaq actually thought and actually achieved rather than either uncritically celebrating or reflexively dismissing the tradition that bears his name.

The Controversy About His Support for the Pakistan Movement

As Part One of this textbook noted, Razzaq was, like many Muslim Bengali intellectuals of his generation, initially a supporter of the Pakistan Movement. This aspect of his intellectual biography has been a source of discomfort for some of his admirers, who would prefer to

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remember him as always having been a committed Bengali nationalist, and it has been used as a criticism by those who are skeptical of the intellectual tradition he represents.

The historical reality is more complex and more interesting than either the apologetic or the critical version of this story suggests. Razzaq's support for the Pakistan Movement was not a simple or unreflective alignment with religious political identity; it was, as far as can be determined from the available evidence, a position grounded in his analysis of the specific historical situation of the Muslim Bengali community in the 1940s and in his understanding of the political possibilities available to that community in the context of the independence negotiations.

His subsequent disillusionment with Pakistan and his eventual commitment to Bengali independence was not a sudden conversion but a gradual process of analytical updating based on the evidence of what Pakistan actually became and what Pakistani governance actually meant for the Bengali population of East Pakistan. This process of analytical revision, painful and publicly costly as it was, demonstrates exactly the kind of intellectual honesty and willingness to follow the evidence wherever it led that his admirers rightly celebrate as a central feature of his intellectual character.

The controversy about his Pakistan Movement support is, therefore, most productively understood not as an embarrassing anomaly in an otherwise perfect intellectual biography but as a case study in how a genuinely honest intellectual navigates the relationship between prior convictions and new evidence, between the frameworks inherited from education and experience and the demands of the specific historical situations those frameworks have to address. In this sense, the Pakistan Movement episode is one of the most instructive aspects of his intellectual biography for those who want to understand how genuine intellectual honesty actually operates in the context of real political life.

The Controversy About His Silence

The controversy about Razzaq's failure to publish has already been discussed in Chapter Three of this part, but it deserves further consideration here in the context of the broader controversies about his legacy. Some critics, including the commentary published in the Journal of Governance, Security and Development following the 2022 book publication, have argued that the emphasis on Razzaq's conversational influence and the mythologization of his silence are ways of avoiding the question of whether he actually produced any intellectual contribution of substance that can be independently evaluated.

This criticism is not entirely without force. The tradition of celebrating the wise teacher who leaves behind no written record is one that is susceptible to a certain kind of intellectual fraud: it is possible to project onto the silence of the uncritical mind the profundity that one wishes to find there. The question of whether Razzaq's silence concealed depths of genuine insight or merely an inability or unwillingness to commit to positions that could be critically evaluated is a legitimate one, and it deserves a more systematic engagement than it has typically received.

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The most adequate response to this criticism is not to ignore it but to engage with it by examining the specific intellectual content that is attributable to Razzaq with the critical tools of contemporary scholarship. This textbook has attempted to do precisely that, and the assessment that emerges is not one of perfect wisdom but of genuine intellectual achievement of a specific and identifiable kind: a sophisticated structural analysis of postcolonial political development, a comparative civilizational framework of real depth and breadth, a jurisprudential and economic analysis of the specific conditions of Bangladesh that anticipated important subsequent developments in these fields, and a pedagogical practice that produced an intellectual formation in his students of demonstrably high quality.

The Controversy About His Position on Democracy and Authoritarianism

A more recent controversy in the scholarship on Razzaq concerns the interpretation of his position on the relationship between democracy and authoritarian governance in the context of postcolonial state formation. Some scholars, drawing on specific aspects of his analysis, have suggested that his recognition of the structural difficulties of democratic consolidation in conditions of institutional weakness implies a degree of sympathy for, or at least acceptance of, authoritarian shortcuts to development.

This interpretation is, in the judgment of this textbook, a fundamental misreading of Razzaq's position. His analysis of the structural difficulties of democratic consolidation was not a justification of authoritarianism but a prescription for taking democratic institution-building more seriously and more systematically. His recognition that democracy does not automatically emerge from the formal adoption of democratic constitutions but requires the patient building of genuinely democratic institutions was not a counsel of despair about democracy but a counsel of realism about what democratic consolidation actually requires.

His opposition to the incorporation of military roles in the governance of the independent Bangladeshi state, noted by multiple sources and confirmed by the 2022 publication's editorial apparatus, was entirely consistent with this position. He understood, with the clarity of structural analysis, that the incorporation of military influence into civilian governance was incompatible with genuine democratic development, not because of anything specific to the military as an institution but because of the structural consequences of mixing military and civilian authority in a state where civilian institutions were not yet sufficiently developed to maintain their independence against the institutional weight of the military.

Chapter Eleven: The Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation and the Institutionalization of Memory

From Personal Legacy to Institutional Mission

The Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation, established by Abul Khair Litu, Razzaq's nephew who inherited his library and became one of the primary custodians of his legacy, represents the most significant institutional expression of the effort to preserve and extend Razzaq's intellectual

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contribution. The foundation's work has included the preservation and partial digitization of Razzaq's library, the publication of the 2022 edition of Political Parties in India, the organisation of academic events and commemorations, and the maintenance of a research facility that scholars studying the intellectual traditions of Bengal can use.

The story of how the Bengal Foundation, one of Bangladesh's most important cultural institutions, grew out of Abul Khair Litu's relationship with his uncle and his uncle's library is itself a remarkable chapter in the history of how intellectual legacies get translated into institutional forms. Litu has described how his exposure to Razzaq's library as a young man, his encounters with the extraordinary range and depth of the intellectual tradition it represented, his conversations with his uncle about the history of ideas and the civilizational traditions of Asia, awakened in him a passion for cultural life that eventually led him to found the Bengal Foundation in the late 1980s.

The Bengal Foundation, which supports music, art, literature, crafts, cinema, and architecture, reflects in its breadth and its cultural ambition the influence of Razzaq's own extraordinarily wide-ranging intellectual curiosity. The foundation's commitment to making culture accessible to a broad public, to working across the boundaries of high and popular culture, to celebrating the full range of human creativity rather than only its most prestigious and most formally recognised expressions, echoes Razzaq's own democratic and anti-elitist approach to intellectual life.

The Library as Archive and Resource

Razzaq's library, which his various biographers and those who knew him describe as numbering in the thousands of volumes and covering an extraordinary range of subjects, is one of the most significant private intellectual collections in the history of Bangladesh. Its character reflects the character of Razzaq's mind: omnivorous, comparative, deeply engaged with both Asian and European intellectual traditions, organized around the fundamental questions of political life and civilizational history rather than around any narrow disciplinary specialization.

The preservation and digitization of this library by the Foundation represents an important contribution to the intellectual resources available to scholars of Bangladeshi and South Asian intellectual history. The library is not merely a collection of books; it is a record of one of the most extraordinary minds in the intellectual history of the Bengal delta, and the specific patterns of what he chose to read, what he annotated, what he kept and what he discarded, are themselves evidence about the character and the development of his thinking that careful scholarship can use.

The digitization project, while important, is incomplete, and the full scholarly potential of the library as a resource for the study of Razzaq's intellectual development has not yet been realised. A systematic study of the library's contents, of the patterns of annotation and marginal commentary that it contains, and of the ways in which specific texts and intellectual traditions are represented within it would be a significant contribution to the history of Bengali intellectual life and to the understanding of Razzaq's thought.

Annual Commemorations and the Renewal of Memory

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The annual commemorations of Razzaq's death anniversary, held on or near November 28 each year, have become an important fixture in Bangladesh's intellectual cultural calendar. The November 2024 commemoration, reported by the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha, brought together academics and writers at the Bangla Academy to recall Razzaq's contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of the nation. Speakers at that event emphasised, among other dimensions of his contribution, his observations on the development of the Bengali Muslim middle class during the colonial period and his identification of the impact of bureaucracy on South Asian politics, themes that they noted remained directly relevant to the political challenges facing Bangladesh in 2024.

The fact that these commemorations are held at institutions like the Bangla Academy, which is the primary national institution for the promotion and study of the Bengali language and literature, reflects the extent to which Razzaq's legacy has been understood as a contribution not just to political science and economic analysis but to the broader project of defining and developing Bengali cultural identity. His place in the commemorative calendar of Bangladeshi intellectual and cultural life is established alongside figures like Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam, though his contribution was of a quite different character from those literary giants.

The content of these commemorations has itself evolved over time, as the interpretive frameworks through which Razzaq's contribution is understood have developed and changed. The early commemorations, in the 1990s and early 2000s, tended to emphasise the personal dimensions of his legacy, the quality of his relationship with his students, the warmth and generosity of his intellectual personality. More recent commemorations have engaged more systematically with the substantive content of his intellectual contribution, with the specific arguments of his thesis and his lectures, and with the question of how those arguments relate to the contemporary political and intellectual challenges facing Bangladesh.

Chapter Twelve: Razzaq and Postcolonial Theory - International Perspectives and Comparative Reception

The Invisible Postcolonialist

Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and Frantz Fanon are the names most commonly invoked in discussions of postcolonial intellectual tradition. These are the figures whose texts are read in graduate seminars in postcolonial studies, whose arguments are engaged with in the major journals of postcolonial literary and cultural criticism, whose frameworks dominate the theoretical vocabulary of the field. Abdur Razzaq is not among these names, and his absence from the canonical texts of postcolonial theory is itself a significant fact that deserves analysis.

The reasons for this absence are multiple and instructive. Most obviously, Razzaq published almost nothing, and the textual apparatus of academic postcolonial theory, which is built on the close reading and critical engagement with specific published works, requires texts to engage with. The oral tradition through which Razzaq's ideas circulated was, by the conventions of

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academic knowledge production, simply not recognizable as academic work in the relevant sense.

Beyond the question of publication, Razzaq's intellectual method differed significantly from the dominant methods of academic postcolonial theory. The postcolonial theory of Said, Bhabha, and Spivak is primarily a form of literary and cultural criticism, grounded in the close reading of literary and philosophical texts and in the application of frameworks derived from French critical theory, psychoanalysis, and deconstructionist philosophy. Razzaq's method was historical and sociological rather than literary and philosophical; he was more interested in the structural conditions of postcolonial political development than in the cultural and discursive dimensions of colonial encounter.

But the substantive concerns of Razzaq's intellectual work overlap significantly with those of academic postcolonial theory. His analysis of the ways in which colonial educational policy and colonial economic exploitation had shaped the consciousness and the political behaviour of the colonized middle class anticipated important themes in both Said's Orientalism and Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth. His analysis of the relationship between civilizational identity and democratic political community engaged with questions that Homi Bhabha's account of colonial hybridity and Gayatri Spivak's account of the subaltern subject address from different theoretical angles.

Razzaq and the Cambridge School

The commentary on the 2022 publication of Political Parties in India noted that Razzaq's analytical approach bore some similarity to the Cambridge School of Indian historiography, associated with scholars like Anil Seal, John Gallagher, and Gordon Johnson, who studied Indian political development in the colonial period with an emphasis on the material interests of political actors and the competition for scarce political and economic resources rather than on the ideological commitments of political movements.

This comparison is illuminating, though the similarities should not be exaggerated. The Cambridge School's approach was grounded in archival research into the specific political calculations of specific political actors in specific historical circumstances, a micro-historical method that produced detailed accounts of local political dynamics. Razzaq's approach was more macrohistorical and more structurally oriented, less concerned with the specific decisions of individual political actors and more concerned with the structural conditions that shaped the range of options available to political actors.

The shared emphasis on material interests and structural conditions, rather than on ideological commitments and normative principles, is a methodological similarity that reflects a common debt to the sociological tradition of political analysis that runs from Marx through Weber through the mid-twentieth century structural-functionalist tradition in political science. Both Razzaq and the Cambridge historians were, in different ways, reacting against the kind of political history that treated great men's decisions and ideas as the primary drivers of historical change, and both were insisting on the importance of the structural and material conditions that set the parameters within which those decisions were made.

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Razzaq and Comparative Political Science

The relationship between Razzaq's intellectual contribution and the academic discipline of comparative political science is a complex one that has not been systematically explored. Razzaq worked in the tradition of political economy that predated the disciplinary division between economics and political science, and his approach to the comparative study of political institutions and political development anticipated many of the concerns that have become central to comparative political science in the second half of the twentieth century.

His emphasis on the importance of institutions in shaping political outcomes, his analysis of the structural conditions of democratic consolidation, his comparative analysis of the different paths to modernity taken by different Asian civilizations: all of these anticipated, in important ways, the theoretical frameworks that comparative political scientists like Samuel Huntington (in The Political Order in Changing Societies, 1968), Robert Dahl (in Polyarchy, 1971), and later Guillermo O'Donnell, Juan Linz, and Alfred Stepan would develop through systematic comparative research.

The parallel between Razzaq's analysis of the structural risks of democratic breakdown in postcolonial states and the comparative analysis of democratic transitions and democratic consolidation that Linz and Stepan developed in Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation (1996) is particularly striking. Linz and Stepan identified five interconnected arenas that needed to be developed for democratic consolidation: civil society, political society, the rule of law, the state apparatus, and an effective economic society. Razzaq's structural analysis, developed through a different method and in a different intellectual tradition, identified essentially the same set of requirements, though without the systematic theoretical formulation that Linz and Stepan provided.

Chapter Thirteen: Razzaq and Contemporary Bangladesh - The Twenty-First Century Relevance

The Political Crisis of 2024 and the Ghost of Razzaq's Analysis

The extraordinary political events of 2024 in Bangladesh, the mass uprising that led to the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her departure from the country in August 2024, the subsequent formation of an interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, and the beginning of a process of political reconstruction that remained uncertain and contested at the time of writing, provided a particularly striking demonstration of the continuing relevance of Razzaq's analytical framework to Bangladeshi political realities.

The specific dynamics of the 2024 political crisis, a student-led mass movement against an entrenched authoritarian government that had progressively hollowed out democratic institutions, that had concentrated power in the hands of a single family and a single party, that had used the machinery of the state to suppress political opposition and to punish dissent, reflected almost

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precisely the structural patterns that Razzaq's analysis had identified as the most dangerous pathologies of South Asian democratic development.

The role of students in leading the uprising, the importance of the university campus as the initial site of political mobilisation, the way in which the movement spread from a specific policy grievance, a quota system for civil service employment, to a broader indictment of the entire political system: all of these dynamics reflect structural features of Bangladeshi political society that Razzaq's analysis had identified and that he had traced to their historical roots in the colonial and early postcolonial periods.

The commemorative discussion held at the Bangla Academy in November 2024, in the immediate aftermath of these events, drew explicitly on Razzaq's analysis to make sense of what had happened and to think about what the political reconstruction of Bangladesh required. Speakers noted that Razzaq had identified the impacts of bureaucracy in the politics of the Indian subcontinent as one of the fundamental structural problems of South Asian political development, and that the specific ways in which the bureaucratic apparatus had been captured by and made to serve the interests of the ruling party and its leadership represented exactly the kind of institutional failure that his analysis had predicted.

The Quota Protest and the Structural Analysis

The specific issue that triggered the 2024 uprising, the quota system for civil service employment and the government's handling of protests against it, can be understood through the lens of Razzaq's structural analysis in instructive ways. The quota system, which reserved a large proportion of civil service positions for the descendants of liberation war veterans, had been a persistent source of political tension in Bangladesh because it intersected with broader questions about the distribution of economic opportunity, the definition of meritocracy, and the relationship between historical justice and present fairness.

Razzaq's analysis of the Bengali Muslim middle class and its relationship to the state, developed through his historical study of the colonial period and his engagement with the postcolonial political development of East Pakistan and Bangladesh, provides a framework for understanding the emotional and political intensity of the 2024 protests. His identification of the competition among the educated middle classes for access to state-controlled economic opportunities as a fundamental driver of South Asian political dynamics, and his recognition that this competition was capable of generating intense political mobilisation, illuminates the specific dynamics of the quota protest movement in ways that more immediate political analysis tends to miss.

His broader analysis of the structural conditions of democratic consolidation also provides a framework for understanding both the causes of the political crisis that the 2024 uprising expressed and the challenges of the political reconstruction that the interim government faces. The hollowing out of democratic institutions that he had identified as the primary risk facing Bangladesh's political development had proceeded, over the course of the Hasina government's period in power, to a point where the institutions themselves had lost the independence and the internal democratic quality necessary for genuine democratic governance.

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The Question of Bangladesh's Second Republic

The political events of 2024 raised, in a particularly acute form, the question that Razzaq's analysis had always been oriented toward: what does the construction of a genuine democratic political community in Bangladesh require, and how can the institutional failures of the first five decades of independence be addressed in a way that makes genuine democratic governance more sustainable?

The answers that Razzaq's analytical framework suggests are not simple or easy. They point, as his analysis always did, to the importance of patient and sustained institution-building, to the development of genuinely independent institutions of judicial review and public accountability, to the reform of political party structures to make them internally democratic and accountable to their members rather than to their leadership families, to the development of a political culture that treats the holding and the transfer of political power as a democratic process governed by rules rather than as a survival competition in which anything goes.

These requirements are demanding ones, and the history of the half century since independence does not provide strong grounds for optimism about their achievement. But the 2024 uprising, and the evidence that it provided of the continuing capacity of the Bangladeshi people for political mobilization in defence of democratic values and against authoritarian governance, does suggest that the democratic political culture that Razzaq's teaching helped to cultivate has not been entirely extinguished by the structural failures of the political system. The people who took to the streets in 2024 were, in a real sense, the intellectual grandchildren of the students who had sat in Razzaq's lecture halls in the 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter Fourteen: The Students and Their Works - The Transmission of an Intellectual Tradition

The Sociology of Razzaq's Influence

The claim, which appears in all the sources that discuss Razzaq's legacy, that he had over seventy members of parliament among his former students, is one of the most striking single facts about his intellectual influence, and it deserves more systematic analysis than it has typically received. The sociological question it raises is not just biographical but structural: how did a lecturer in political science at the University of Dhaka, a man who published almost nothing and who rejected all institutional markers of status and influence, come to exercise such extraordinary influence over the political formation of so many individuals who went on to shape the political development of Bangladesh?

The answer to this question requires an understanding of the specific social and institutional conditions of the University of Dhaka in the period of Razzaq's active teaching, from 1936 through 1975. The university was, in this period, the primary institution for the formation of the Bengali Muslim intellectual and political elite. The small size of the Bengali Muslim educated class, the concentration of higher education in a single university in Dhaka (with only limited

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alternatives in Chittagong and Rajshahi), and the prestige of the University of Dhaka as the centre of intellectual and cultural life for the Bengali Muslim community meant that virtually everyone who was going to matter in the intellectual and political life of Bengal, and later of Bangladesh, passed through its classrooms.

Within the university, Razzaq occupied a particular position. He was not the most powerful or the most formally distinguished member of the faculty; he was a lecturer, not a professor, and he held no major administrative position. But he was, by all accounts, the most intellectually alive, the most genuinely engaged with the fundamental questions of political life, and the most capable of communicating that engagement to his students. In an institution where the quality of intellectual life varied enormously, Razzaq represented something exceptional: a genuinely first-rate mind grappling with the most important questions of the day and doing so in a way that communicated the excitement and the importance of the intellectual enterprise to those who came in contact with him.

The selectivity of his deeper influence also needs to be noted. Not everyone who attended his lectures became a devoted student or a lifelong intellectual disciple. His influence was concentrated among those students who were already oriented toward serious intellectual engagement, who were capable of and interested in the kind of analytical thinking that he modelled, and who found in his teaching a framework for understanding political reality that was genuinely illuminating. These students became, in turn, the teachers, the political leaders, the judges, and the public intellectuals who carried the influence of his framework into the institutions and the public debates of independent Bangladesh.

Ahmed Sofa: The Literary Witness

Ahmed Sofa, one of Bangladesh's most important twentieth-century writers, was among Razzaq's most intimate intellectual disciples, and his book Jaddapi Amar Guru (Although He Is My Teacher) is the most intimate and the most literarily sophisticated of the accounts of Razzaq's intellectual personality that we possess. Sofa was not primarily a political scientist or a social scientist; he was a novelist, poet, and intellectual of extraordinary range whose work engaged with questions of Bengali identity, cultural tradition, modernity, and political life in ways that were shaped, in fundamental ways, by the intellectual formation he received from Razzaq.

Sofa's account of Razzaq is valuable precisely because it engages with the personal and the intellectual simultaneously, because it does not separate the man's personality from his intellectual contribution, and because it is written by someone whose literary gift for psychological observation and narrative illumination brings to the portrait of Razzaq dimensions that more purely academic accounts miss. The specific quality of Razzaq's conversation, the rhythm and texture of his intellectual engagement, the way in which his laughter and his silences functioned as forms of intellectual communication: Sofa's account of these things provides evidence about the character of Razzaq's intellectual practice that no purely analytical account can replicate.

Sofa's work is also significant because it represents the transmission of Razzaq's influence into the domain of literary and cultural criticism. The intellectual framework that Razzaq had

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developed through his historical and political analysis found, in Sofa's literary work, a form of expression and application that extended its reach far beyond the academic classroom, into the broad public culture of Bangladesh. Sofa's influence on Bangladeshi literary and intellectual culture was itself enormous, and through his work the intellectual tradition that Razzaq represented penetrated the domains of fiction, poetry, and cultural criticism in ways that purely academic work could not have achieved.

Sardar Fazlul Karim and the Philosophical Biography

Sardar Fazlul Karim's contribution to the documentation of Razzaq's thought was of a quite different character from Sofa's. Where Sofa wrote from the inside, from the intimacy of a long personal and intellectual relationship, Karim's book Dhaka Bisshobiddalay O Purbabangya Samaj (The University of Dhaka and East Bengal Society) was based on systematic interviews with Razzaq, organised around specific intellectual themes, and presented in a form that is closer to intellectual biography than to personal memoir.

Karim's achievement was to create a documentary record of Razzaq's thinking on a range of specific historical and political questions, a record that, while necessarily incomplete and filtered through the medium of Karim's questions and framings, provides a more systematic account of Razzaq's intellectual positions than the purely anecdotal record that most other sources provide. The specific content of Razzaq's analysis of the University of Dhaka and its relationship to the broader social and intellectual development of East Bengal, as documented by Karim, is among the most valuable evidence we have about the content of his thinking on questions of educational institution and intellectual formation.

The title of Karim's book is itself significant: by framing Razzaq's thought in terms of the relationship between the university and the society, it places the emphasis exactly where Razzaq himself would have placed it, on the institution of the university as a social institution with a specific role in the formation of a society's intellectual and political life. Razzaq's understanding of what the University of Dhaka was and what it should be, his critique of the ways in which it had been shaped by colonial priorities and postcolonial political pressures, and his vision of what a genuinely excellent university in the context of Bangladesh could and should achieve, are themes that run through Karim's documentary record and that remain relevant to contemporary debates about higher education in Bangladesh.

Rounaq Jahan and the Scholarly Transmission

Professor Rounaq Jahan represents the transmission of Razzaq's intellectual influence into the domain of professional academic political science in a way that makes her contribution particularly important for the scholarly legacy of his thinking. A political scientist of international reputation, affiliated with institutions like Columbia University and the Centre for Policy Dialogue in Dhaka, Jahan brought the analytical frameworks that Razzaq had developed through decades of teaching into contact with the methodological standards and the comparative empirical research of international political science.

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Her scholarship on Pakistani political development, most notably her book Pakistan: Failure in National Integration (1972), published in the immediate aftermath of the liberation war, can be read as a direct scholarly application of the structural analytical framework that Razzaq's teaching had established. Her analysis of why Pakistan had failed to develop the integrative political institutions necessary for national cohesion, her examination of the structural tensions between the Bengali-speaking East and the Urdu-speaking West that made political integration impossible, and her assessment of the conditions of successful democratic consolidation all reflect the intellectual formation she received from Razzaq, translated into the vocabulary and the methodology of professional academic political science.

Jahan's subsequent scholarship on Bangladeshi politics, democracy, and gender has continued to draw on and to develop the analytical framework that Razzaq's teaching established. Her central role in the 2022 publication of Political Parties in India, including the writing of the foreword and her participation in the book launch discussions, represents a final and significant act of intellectual acknowledgment of the debt that her scholarly career owes to the teacher who shaped her analytical formation.

Chapter Fifteen: The Question of Razzaq's Radicalism - A Reappraisal

Was Razzaq a Conservative, a Liberal, or a Radical?

The question of how to classify Razzaq's political thought in terms of the conventional categories of political ideology is both important and genuinely difficult. His admirers from different political traditions have tended to claim him for their own: the liberal democrats have emphasized his commitment to democracy and his critique of authoritarianism; the socialist left has emphasized his analysis of colonial economic exploitation and his critique of the existing social order; those who see themselves as cultural conservatives have emphasised his deep engagement with Islamic intellectual tradition and his respect for the civilizational heritage of the Muslim world. Each of these claims captures something real about his intellectual position, and none of them captures the whole.

The most accurate characterization of Razzaq's political orientation is probably a form of social liberalism with strong historical and cultural sensitivity: a commitment to democratic political institutions and individual rights combined with a recognition of the importance of social and cultural context in shaping the conditions within which democratic politics can flourish, and a historical analysis of the specific ways in which colonial capitalism had distorted the social and economic conditions of Bengal in ways that needed to be addressed if genuine political freedom was to be possible.

This characterization places him closer to the tradition of John Stuart Mill's On Liberty and Representative Government, enriched by the historical analysis of Harold Laski and the comparative civilizational awareness of the oriental studies tradition, than to either the Marxist left or the religious conservative right. It is a position that is philosophically coherent and

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analytically sophisticated, though it lacks the simplicity and the mobilizing force of the more ideologically committed positions on either side.

The Radical Dimension: Critique of the Status Quo

Within this broadly liberal framework, however, there was a genuinely radical dimension to Razzaq's analysis, one that has sometimes been obscured by the emphasis on his personal qualities and his pedagogical practice. His critique of the colonial economic order, his insistence that the poverty of Bengal was historically produced rather than naturally given, his analysis of the ways in which the colonial state had systematically distorted and impoverished the economic and social life of the delta: all of these elements of his thinking pointed toward the necessity of fundamental structural transformation, not merely incremental reform.

His critique of the Pakistani political order, and his analysis of why Pakistani governance had failed the Bengali population of East Pakistan, was similarly radical in its implications. He was not merely criticizing bad policy or poor governance within a fundamentally sound political framework; he was identifying the fundamental structural incompatibility between the political project of Pakistani nationalism and the legitimate political aspirations of the Bengali-speaking majority of the country's eastern wing.

His analysis of the structural risks facing Bangladesh's post-independence political development was radical in a different but equally important sense: it was a challenge to the triumphalism of the independence moment, an insistence that independence was not the solution to Bangladesh's political problems but the beginning of the work of addressing them, and that the specific institutional choices made in the early post-independence period would determine whether independence would produce genuine political freedom or merely a new form of political dependence.

Chapter Sixteen: Razzaq and the Question of Bengali Muslim Intellectual Tradition - A Synthesis

The Intellectual Tradition He Represented and Extended

Razzaq needs to be understood not only as an individual intellectual but as a figure within a specific intellectual tradition, the tradition of the Bengali Muslim intellectual engagement with modernity, with political self-determination, and with the question of what Bengali Muslim identity means in the context of the modern world. This tradition has a history that predates Razzaq and that has continued to develop after him, and situating him within it is essential to understanding both the significance of his contribution and its limitations.

The Bengali Muslim intellectual engagement with modernity begins, in its modern form, with figures like Nawab Sir Salimullah and the Muslim League politicians of the early twentieth century who articulated the political aspirations of the Bengali Muslim community within the framework of colonial constitutional politics. But the more profound intellectual engagement, the

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attempt not merely to assert Muslim Bengali political interests but to think through the fundamental questions of identity, knowledge, and political community, begins with figures like Syed Amir Ali and the tradition of Islamic modernism in British India.

Razzaq belongs to a specific generation and a specific variant of this tradition: the generation of Bengali Muslim intellectuals who received their intellectual formation in the context of the University of Dhaka's early decades, who were exposed to both European social science and the indigenous intellectual traditions of the subcontinent, and who tried to synthesize these different intellectual resources in the service of the specific political and cultural challenges facing their community.

His specific contribution to this tradition was to bring to it an unusually high degree of historical depth and comparative breadth, to insist on the complexity of the questions it addressed and to resist the simplifications that political mobilization required, and to cultivate in successive generations of students the analytical capacity to engage with that complexity honestly. In doing so, he established a standard for intellectual seriousness in the engagement with Bengali Muslim political and cultural identity that remains a challenge for those who come after him.

The Continuing Challenge

The questions that Razzaq's intellectual tradition addresses are not questions that have been resolved by the passage of time or by Bangladesh's development as a state. The relationship between Bengali cultural identity and Islamic religious identity remains contested, with different political forces continuing to articulate different answers to the question of what Bangladesh is and what kind of state it should be. The structural challenges of democratic consolidation remain as acute in 2025 as they were in 1975, as the events of the 2024 political crisis demonstrated with painful clarity. The economic challenges of development in a densely populated, ecologically vulnerable delta remain formidable, even as Bangladesh's development achievements over the past three decades have been remarkable by the standards of postcolonial development.

In addressing these continuing challenges, the intellectual tradition that Razzaq established remains a valuable resource. Not because his specific positions on any given question are necessarily the right ones, but because the quality of the intellectual engagement he modelled, the commitment to historical depth, comparative breadth, analytical rigour, and intellectual honesty, is exactly the quality that addressing these challenges requires.

The most important lesson of his intellectual legacy is not any specific conclusion he reached but the way he reached it: by taking the questions seriously, by subjecting his own assumptions to critical scrutiny, by following the evidence wherever it led, by maintaining the commitment to honest inquiry that he described, in the accounts preserved by his students, as the fundamental requirement of intellectual life.

Chapter Seventeen: Razzaq and the Future of Political Philosophy in Bangladesh

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The Unfinished Project

Any serious assessment of Razzaq's intellectual legacy must acknowledge that it is, in important respects, an unfinished project. The questions he engaged with have not been resolved, and the analytical frameworks he developed are still being worked out in their implications. The publication of Political Parties in India in 2022 was not the completion of his legacy but a new beginning, an invitation to engage more systematically with the specific arguments of his most sustained intellectual work and to develop their implications for contemporary political analysis.

The future development of the intellectual tradition he represented depends on the willingness of the next generation of Bangladeshi intellectuals to engage with his work in the spirit in which it was conceived: critically, rigorously, and with the same commitment to honest inquiry that he himself exemplified. Hagiography, the uncritical celebration of a great man's wisdom, is the most dangerous form of intellectual legacy, because it substitutes reverence for engagement and prevents the genuine development of the tradition it claims to honour.

The most productive engagement with Razzaq's legacy will be one that takes his specific arguments seriously enough to subject them to critical scrutiny, that identifies the genuine insights within them and develops their implications, that acknowledges the limitations and the errors without dismissing the achievement, and that connects his analysis to the contemporary developments in political philosophy, comparative politics, postcolonial theory, and economic analysis that have occurred since his death in 1999.

The Tasks of Contemporary Scholarship

Several specific tasks of contemporary scholarship follow from this assessment. First, there is the task of systematic reconstruction: the careful collection, analysis, and organization of the scattered evidence about Razzaq's intellectual positions that is preserved in the accounts of his students, in the texts of his lectures, and in the documentary record of his conversations and interviews. This is a genuinely difficult task, given the primarily oral character of his intellectual practice, but it is one that the available evidence makes possible, at least in outline.

Second, there is the task of critical evaluation: the systematic assessment of the specific arguments that can be attributed to Razzaq, using the analytical tools and the empirical evidence that contemporary scholarship provides. This assessment needs to be genuinely critical, identifying both the insights that hold up under scrutiny and the limitations and errors that subsequent evidence and analysis have revealed.

Third, there is the task of application: the development of Razzaq's analytical frameworks in their implications for specific contemporary questions of Bangladeshi political development, constitutional design, economic strategy, and cultural policy. This is the task that his students were always engaged in during his lifetime, and it is the task that the intellectual tradition he established continues to demand.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, there is the task of connecting his tradition to the international scholarly conversations in which it has a genuine contribution to make. The

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analysis of postcolonial political development, the comparative study of democratic consolidation, the study of the relationship between civilizational identity and democratic political community: these are areas in which the international scholarly conversation has developed significantly since Razzaq's death, and in which the analytical frameworks he developed have genuine contributions to offer if they can be articulated in the vocabulary of contemporary scholarship.

Chapter Eighteen: Philosophical Themes - Epistemology, Ethics, and Metaphysics in Razzaq's Intellectual Framework

Knowledge and Its Limits

Although Razzaq's primary domain was political science and historical analysis, his intellectual framework had a philosophical dimension that is important to understand and that connects to the broader tradition of political philosophy in which his thinking was grounded. His epistemological commitments, his understanding of how we know what we know and what the limits of that knowledge are, shaped his approach to political analysis in fundamental ways.

His epistemology was, at its core, empiricist in the British philosophical tradition: grounded in the conviction that genuine knowledge is built from the careful observation of specific historical and empirical evidence, rather than derived from abstract principles or deduced from ideological commitments. This empiricism was not naive; he was perfectly well aware that all observation is theory-laden, that the concepts through which we organise our perception of social reality shape what we see and what we miss. But his response to this awareness was not epistemological skepticism or relativism; it was the insistence on the importance of cultivating the analytical disciplines that allow us to be as clear as possible about our own assumptions and as rigorous as possible in our engagement with the evidence.

This empiricist epistemology had direct implications for his approach to political analysis. It meant that his political judgements were always provisional, always open to revision in the light of new evidence, always grounded in specific historical and comparative evidence rather than derived from any ideological commitment that was treated as beyond question. This is why his evolution from Pakistan Movement supporter to committed Bengali independence advocate was not, in his own understanding, a betrayal of principle but an update of analysis in the light of evidence.

The Ethics of Intellectual Life

Razzaq's ethical framework, insofar as it can be reconstructed from the accounts of those who knew him and from the documented expressions of his views, was fundamentally an ethics of intellectual integrity. He believed that the fundamental ethical obligation of the intellectual was honesty: the obligation to follow the evidence wherever it led, to say what one actually thought rather than what was politically convenient or socially acceptable, to maintain the courage of one's intellectual convictions in the face of social pressure and political risk.

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This ethics of intellectual integrity was not merely professional ethics; it was a comprehensive ethical framework that connected the intellectual life to the political life. He believed that dishonesty in the intellectual domain, the willingness to say what is politically convenient rather than what the evidence supports, had direct consequences for the quality of political decision-making and therefore for the welfare of the political community as a whole. The intellectual who distorts analysis for political purposes is not merely failing in a professional obligation; he or she is doing a genuine harm to the political community that depends on honest analysis for the quality of its collective decisions.

This conviction helps explain the particular character of his intellectual courage, his willingness to say things that his political friends found uncomfortable, his refusal to soften his analysis of the Mujib government's failures or the structural limitations of the liberation movement, his insistence on the continuing complexity of the question of Bengali Muslim identity even when simpler answers were politically convenient. These were not merely expressions of personal temperament; they were expressions of a fundamental ethical commitment to the integrity of intellectual life as a contribution to democratic political community.

The Metaphysics of Political Community

At the deepest level of Razzaq's intellectual framework, there is a set of metaphysical commitments about the nature of political community and what it requires that deserve more explicit articulation than they have typically received. His understanding of political community was not the thin, contractarian understanding of liberal political theory in its most reductive form, in which political community is simply a set of agreed-upon rules for coordinating individual interests. It was a thicker, more historically grounded understanding, in which political community is a shared historical achievement, a form of life that has been built up over generations through the accumulated experience of living together, arguing together, governing together, and suffering together.

This understanding of political community as historical achievement rather than rational construction had important implications for his approach to political design. It meant that political institutions could not be simply constructed from scratch according to abstract principles, but had to be grown organically from the specific historical conditions of the community they were to serve. It meant that the appropriate model for Bangladeshi political institutions was not the British parliamentary model or the American presidential model or any other model derived from the experience of a different historical community, but a model that engaged seriously with the specific historical experience and the specific social conditions of the Bengal delta.

This is not a conservative argument against political change; it is an argument about the conditions that make political change sustainable. Change that is imposed from above, that ignores the historical conditions and the social habits of the community it seeks to transform, will generate resistance and will eventually either be reversed or will succeed only at the cost of the kind of political violence that makes genuine democratic life impossible. Change that engages with the historical conditions of the community, that builds on the genuine resources of its social

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life while addressing its genuine pathologies, has a better chance of producing sustainable political transformation.

This metaphysical understanding of political community as historical achievement connects Razzaq's political thought to the tradition of political philosophy associated with Edmund Burke, Hegel, and more recently to communitarians like Michael Sandel and Charles Taylor, who have insisted on the importance of cultural and historical community in shaping the conditions within which individual rights and democratic institutions can be meaningful. At the same time, his commitment to democratic political institutions and individual rights distinguishes him clearly from the conservative tradition that sometimes invokes Burke's name, and places him within the tradition of what might be called historical liberalism: a form of liberal political thought that takes seriously the historical and cultural conditions of political community without abandoning the commitment to political freedom and individual rights as fundamental values.

Chapter Nineteen: The Death and the Afterlife of a Mind

November 28, 1999

Professor Abdur Razzaq died on November 28, 1999, at the age of approximately eighty-five, of the accumulated effects of old age and physical frailty. His death was not unexpected; he had been in declining health for some years, and those who knew him had been aware that his time was limited. But it was nonetheless a moment of genuine loss for the intellectual community that had formed around him and that had depended on his presence as a source of intellectual orientation and as a model of intellectual integrity.

The responses to his death, documented in the press reports and the commemorative essays that appeared in the days and weeks following, reflected the breadth and the depth of his influence. Political leaders, judges, economists, writers, artists, and academics from across the spectrum of Bangladeshi intellectual life expressed their sense of loss, and the quality of the tributes paid to him reflected the quality of the influence he had exercised. These were not the formulaic expressions of official mourning that typically accompany the deaths of prominent figures; they were personal expressions of intellectual debt, of the recognition that a mind of exceptional quality had shaped one's own thinking in ways that could not be fully articulated but could not be ignored.

The Years After Death: Memory and Renewal

The years between 1999 and 2022 were, in an important sense, the years of Razzaq's invisible afterlife: a period during which his influence continued to operate through the minds of those he had formed, while the broader public culture was only intermittently reminded of the specific intellectual contribution that had produced that influence. The annual commemorations kept his name alive, and the occasional publication of accounts of his life and thought by those who had known him maintained a documentary record of his intellectual personality. But the deeper

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engagement with the specific content of his intellectual contribution had to wait for the publication of Political Parties in India in 2022.

That publication was, in retrospect, the most significant single event in the post-death history of Razzaq's intellectual legacy. It provided, for the first time, a substantial text bearing his name through which readers could engage directly with the specifics of his analytical thinking rather than relying entirely on second-hand accounts. It generated a renewed scholarly and public debate about the quality and the relevance of his intellectual contribution. And it created the institutional occasion for the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation to present itself and its mission to a broader public and to begin the work of systematic scholarly engagement with the legacy.

The scholarship that has appeared since 2022, including the critical academic commentary in the Journal of Governance, Security and Development, the newspaper and magazine discussions of the book's significance, and the renewed attention to his life and work in the annual commemorations of 2022, 2023, and 2024, suggests that the intellectual engagement with Razzaq's legacy is entering a new and more mature phase. The combination of appropriate distance from the hagiographic impulse, the availability of a substantial text for critical scholarly engagement, and the renewed political relevance of his analytical framework in the context of Bangladesh's 2024 political crisis creates the conditions for the kind of serious, critical, and productive engagement with his legacy that his own standards of intellectual honesty require.

Chapter Twenty: Synthesis - What Razzaq's Legacy Means for the Future

The Measure of a Mind

How do we measure the legacy of a man who wrote almost nothing, who refused institutional power, who taught through conversation and example rather than through published argument, and whose ideas circulate through the world primarily through the minds of those he formed rather than through texts that bear his name? The standard academic measures, publications, citations, institutional positions, do not apply, and their inapplicability is itself philosophically significant.

The most appropriate measure is the one that Razzaq himself would have chosen: the quality of the thinking that his influence produced in those he taught, the quality of the political decisions that his students made, the quality of the institutions they built, the quality of the intellectual tradition they developed and transmitted. By this measure, which is both harder to quantify and more genuinely significant than citation counts, his legacy is one of the most substantial in the intellectual history of Bangladesh.

His students included the constitution-makers of 1972, the economists who designed Bangladesh's early development strategies, the judges who interpreted the constitution, the journalists who informed the public, the intellectuals who shaped the cultural life of the nation. The quality of what those students did, the extent to which it reflected the analytical rigour, the

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historical depth, and the normative commitments that his teaching had instilled, is the measure of his contribution.

The Tradition That Must Continue

The most important thing that can be said about Razzaq's legacy, in the light of the analysis this textbook has attempted, is that it is a tradition that must continue rather than a monument that must be preserved. The difference between these two metaphors is fundamental. A monument is static; it commemorates what was and invites reverence but not engagement. A tradition is dynamic; it carries forward what was most essential in its founding insights while developing those insights in response to new questions and new evidence.

The founding insights of the tradition Razzaq established are not difficult to identify: the importance of historical depth in political analysis, the necessity of comparative civilizational awareness, the commitment to democratic political institutions as the only legitimate basis for political authority in the modern world, the recognition of the structural complexity of democratic consolidation in postcolonial conditions, the insistence on intellectual honesty as the fundamental ethical obligation of the intellectual, and the cultivation of the kind of critical analytical capacity that allows these commitments to be expressed in engagement with specific concrete problems rather than as abstract general principles.

These are insights that the Bangladesh of 2025, facing the challenges of political reconstruction after the 2024 crisis, of economic development in an ecologically vulnerable delta facing the intensifying challenges of climate change, of cultural identity in a globalizing world, needs as urgently as it needed them when Razzaq first articulated them in the conversation rooms and classrooms of the University of Dhaka.

The continuing task of the intellectual tradition that he established is to develop these insights in engagement with the specific challenges of the present, to maintain the standards of analytical rigour and historical depth that he exemplified while adapting the specific arguments to the evidence and the problems of a changed and changing world. This is the most adequate form of tribute to a man who believed, above all else, in the power of honest thinking to contribute to the improvement of political life.

A Note on What Has Not Been Said

It is worth noting, in conclusion of this part, what cannot yet be said with confidence about Razzaq's intellectual legacy. The absence of a systematic archive of his conversations, lectures, and private communications means that our understanding of his specific intellectual positions on many questions is incomplete and dependent on second-hand accounts of varying reliability. The systematic study of his library, which could provide important evidence about the development of his thinking and the sources that shaped it, has not yet been completed. The engagement of international scholarship with his contribution is still in its early stages, and the extent of his relevance to debates in comparative political science, postcolonial theory, and development economics has not been systematically assessed.

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These gaps are not merely inconvenient; they represent genuine opportunities for future research that can significantly deepen our understanding of one of the most extraordinary intellectual figures that Bangladesh has produced. The work of the next generation of scholars of Bangladeshi intellectual history, working with the resources of the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation's archive, the digitized library, the published accounts of his students, and the recent critical scholarship, will do more to illuminate the full dimensions of his contribution than any single textbook can attempt.

What this textbook has attempted is to provide the analytical framework within which that future work can be situated, to identify the most important questions that research into his legacy needs to address, and to demonstrate, through the sustained engagement with his ideas that the four parts of this book have undertaken, that those questions are worth asking and that the engagement with them is intellectually rewarding for anyone who cares about the history of ideas in South Asia and the challenges of political life in the twenty-first century.

Selected Bibliography and Further Reading for Part Four

The primary sources for Part Four build on those cited in previous parts, while adding the substantial literature that has appeared since 2022 in connection with the publication of Political Parties in India.

For the publication itself and its reception: Political Parties in India, by Abdur Razzaq, edited by Ahrar Ahmad, published by University Press Limited (2022), is of course the essential starting point. The foreword by Rounaq Jahan provides the most authoritative scholarly introduction to the work and its significance. The commentary published in the Journal of Governance, Security and Development (2022) provides the most systematic critical academic assessment of the book's arguments and their limitations.

For the coverage of the book launch and the public discussion it generated: reporting in The Daily Star, New Age, and Prothom Alo from January 2022 provides contemporaneous documentation of the public intellectual reception.

For the institutional expressions of Razzaq's legacy: the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation website (abdur-razzaq-foundation.org) and the Bengal Foundation website (bengalfoundation.org) provide information about the institutional frameworks through which his legacy is being maintained and developed.

For the political context of Bangladesh's post-independence development: Ali Riaz's Bangladesh: A Political History Since Independence (2016) provides the most comprehensive recent account of the political history within which Razzaq's legacy has operated. Naomi Hossain's The Aid Lab: Understanding Bangladesh's Unexpected Success (2017) provides an important perspective on the economic development that has occurred alongside, and sometimes despite, the political failures that Razzaq's analysis had predicted.

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For the November 2024 commemoration and its context: the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha report of November 25, 2024, provides documentation of the annual memorial discussion at the Bangla Academy and the specific intellectual themes that it addressed in the aftermath of the 2024 political crisis.

For the theoretical frameworks deployed in this part: Jurgen Habermas's Between Facts and Norms (1996) provides the most philosophically rigorous account of the relationship between democratic political institutions and the communicative practices that sustain them, a framework that illuminates important dimensions of Razzaq's democratic theory. Amartya Sen's The Idea of Justice (2009) provides a framework for the kind of comparative, contextually sensitive approach to political evaluation that Razzaq's method anticipates. Partha Chatterjee's The Nation and Its Fragments (1993) provides the most sophisticated postcolonial engagement with the question of how the colonized subject constructs and inhabits the domain of political modernity.

For the development economics dimensions of Part Four's analysis: Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom (1999) provides the most important contemporary framework for thinking about the relationship between economic development and political freedom in postcolonial conditions, a framework whose connections to Razzaq's economic thinking deserve systematic exploration. Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson's Why Nations Fail (2012) provides the most influential recent statement of the institutional theory of economic development that Razzaq's structural analysis had anticipated in important ways.

For Ibn Khaldun and the Islamic social theory that informed Razzaq's civilizational analysis: the most accessible scholarly introduction to Ibn Khaldun's thought in English is Robert Irwin's Ibn Khaldun: An Intellectual Biography (2018), which provides both a reconstruction of Ibn Khaldun's ideas and an assessment of their relevance to contemporary social theory. The translation of the Muqaddimah by Franz Rosenthal, available in the Bollingen series, remains the standard English version.

For the oriental studies dimensions of his work: Said's Orientalism (1978), whatever its limitations, remains the essential starting point for any critical engagement with the orientalist tradition. Dipesh Chakrabarty's Provincializing Europe (2000) provides the most sophisticated postcolonial critique of the assumption that European historical experience provides the universal template for non-European modernities, a critique whose implications for Razzaq's civilizational analysis deserve systematic exploration.

End of Part Four. Part Five will examine Razzaq's engagement with Oriental Studies as a distinct intellectual discipline, his comparative analysis of Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian civilizational traditions, the specific contributions he made to the understanding of Bengal's civilizational heritage, his analysis of the relationship between the colonial disruption of indigenous intellectual traditions and the project of cultural reconstruction in independent Bangladesh, and the contemporary relevance of his civilizational analysis to questions of cultural policy and national identity in the twenty-first century. It will also examine in depth the

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technical legal and constitutional dimensions of his thought, including his contribution to the specific debates about constitutional design that shaped the legal framework of Bangladesh.

PART FIVE: THE CIVILIZATIONAL MIND - ORIENTAL STUDIES, COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY, JURISPRUDENCE, AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF KNOWLEDGE

Bengal Between East and West, Islam and Modernity, Law and Justice, Text and Tradition

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Preface to Part Five

There is a particular kind of intellectual courage that consists not in the dramatic confrontation with power but in the patient refusal to accept the intellectual frameworks that power imposes. Professor Abdur Razzaq demonstrated this courage throughout his life, but nowhere more consistently or more consequentially than in his engagement with the traditions of knowledge that the colonial educational system had organized into a hierarchy: European learning at the top, Asian traditions below, folk and oral traditions at the bottom, and the entire structure presented not as a historically contingent arrangement of power but as the natural order of intelligence itself.

Part Five of this textbook undertakes the most philosophically ambitious dimension of this study: a systematic engagement with the full range of Razzaq's intellectual contribution to what might be called the architecture of knowledge in postcolonial Bangladesh. This architecture encompasses his engagement with Oriental Studies as a formal academic discipline and as a project of civilizational self-understanding, his comparative analysis of the major philosophical traditions of Asia and their relationship to each other and to European modernity, his contribution to legal and constitutional thought in Bangladesh and South Asia, his understanding of the relationship between religion and political philosophy in Islamic and Hindu traditions, and his vision of what a genuinely postcolonial intellectual culture in Bangladesh would look like and what it would require.

These themes are connected at the deepest level by a single fundamental question: what does it mean to think from within a specific civilizational tradition while remaining genuinely open to the insights of other traditions, including the European tradition that colonial history had placed in such a powerful position in the intellectual life of the subcontinent? This is the question that defines the intellectual challenge of every major thinker who has worked in the space between Asian and European intellectual cultures, and Razzaq's response to it, worked out through decades of reading, conversation, and patient analytical engagement, is one of the most sophisticated and most honest that the South Asian intellectual tradition has produced.

The reach of this part is necessarily broad, and the scholarly literature it engages with spans multiple disciplines and multiple intellectual traditions. Where possible, the discussion draws on the most recent scholarship, including work published in 2023, 2024, and 2025 that has

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developed relevant theoretical frameworks in political philosophy, postcolonial theory, comparative religion, constitutional law, and the history of ideas. The aim is not encyclopedic coverage but the kind of depth that illuminates the structure of Razzaq's thinking and demonstrates its continuing relevance to the intellectual challenges of the present.

Chapter One: What Is Oriental Studies and Why Does It Matter

The Name and Its Burden

Few academic labels carry as much intellectual, political, and emotional weight as the phrase "Oriental Studies." The weight comes from two directions that pull in opposite ways. From one direction comes the weight of Edward Said's Orientalism, published in 1978, which transformed the study of what Europeans had called the Orient into a site of sustained critical inquiry about the relationship between knowledge and power, between scholarship and imperialism, between the academic study of other civilizations and the political project of subjugating them. Said's argument, condensed to its essential claim, was that the academic discipline of Orientalism had produced not knowledge about the East but a specific ideological construction of the East as the exotic, irrational, despotic, and underdeveloped Other of a rational, progressive, and morally superior West, and that this construction had served imperial political purposes by making the domination of Asian and African peoples by European powers seem natural, inevitable, and even beneficent.

From the other direction comes the weight of a genuine intellectual tradition, stretching back centuries, of extraordinarily serious and rigorous scholarship about the languages, literatures, philosophies, histories, and religions of Asia. The great Orientalists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, scholars like William Jones, who translated Sanskrit texts of extraordinary literary and philosophical richness, or Silvestre de Sacy, who produced foundational works of Arabic philology, or Theodore Noldeke, whose textual scholarship on the Quran remains indispensable, were doing real and serious intellectual work whose value cannot be reduced to its ideological function. The fact that their work served imperial purposes does not mean that the knowledge it produced was false or worthless; it means that the production of knowledge is always embedded in specific political and social conditions and that those conditions shape what questions get asked and what gets treated as worthy of investigation, even as the answers to those questions, once produced, have a kind of objective validity that transcends the political circumstances of their production.

Razzaq navigated between these two dimensions of the Oriental Studies tradition with a sophistication that was, characteristically, more evident in his practice than in any explicit methodological discussion. He drew on the scholarship of European Orientalists where it provided genuine insight and accurate information, and he criticized or ignored it where it was distorted by ideological assumptions. He engaged with the indigenous intellectual traditions of Asia on their own terms, taking seriously the philosophical, literary, and historical achievements of those traditions without romanticizing them or treating them as alternatives to the European

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tradition rather than as independent contributions to the universal human project of making sense of the world.

Oriental Studies as Self-Knowledge

The most distinctive feature of Razzaq's engagement with Oriental Studies is that it was, fundamentally, a project of self-knowledge rather than of knowledge about the Other. This distinction is philosophically crucial. The Orientalist tradition that Said criticized was, at its core, a project of European self-definition: the construction of an Oriental Other served primarily to define the boundaries of European identity, to clarify, by contrast, what European civilization was and was not, what it had achieved and what it had transcended. The Orient was the mirror in which Europe saw its own reflection, elaborated and distorted to serve the needs of imperial self-understanding.

Razzaq, as a Bengali Muslim intellectual who had grown up within the civilizational traditions he was studying, was engaged in something fundamentally different. His study of Islamic philosophy, of Hindu philosophical traditions, of the history of the Bengal delta, of the comparative civilizational trajectories of Asia, was not a study of the Other but a study of the Self in its largest and most complex dimensions. He was trying to understand what he himself was, as a member of a specific civilizational tradition with a specific history, in order to think more clearly about what his community needed and what political choices were appropriate to its specific situation.

This inward orientation of the project of Oriental Studies, this understanding of it as a form of civilizational self-understanding rather than as a form of knowledge about exotic others, gives Razzaq's engagement with the tradition a character that is fundamentally different from the Orientalist tradition as Said described it. It is also, as recent scholarship in postcolonial intellectual history has increasingly recognized, the characteristic orientation of the most important Asian intellectuals who engaged with Oriental Studies in the colonial and postcolonial periods.

Figures like Rabindranath Tagore, whose engagement with the Indian philosophical tradition and with the comparative study of Asian civilizations was oriented toward the understanding of what India was and what it could become, or Muhammad Iqbal, whose engagement with Islamic philosophy was oriented toward the reconstruction of Islamic thought for the conditions of the modern world, or Tenshin Okakura, the Japanese intellectual who developed a vision of Asian civilizational unity in response to Western imperialism, all engaged with Oriental Studies as a project of civilizational self-knowledge rather than as a study of exotic others. Razzaq belongs in this company, and understanding him in relation to these figures illuminates important dimensions of his intellectual project.

Chapter Two: The Islamic Intellectual Tradition and Razzaq's Engagement with It

The Tradition He Inherited

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The Islamic intellectual tradition that Razzaq inherited and engaged with is one of the great achievements of human civilization, and its scope and its sophistication are still inadequately appreciated in the Western world, where the popular image of Islam as a religion of law and ritual rather than of philosophy and science persists despite the massive scholarly evidence to the contrary. Razzaq was fully aware of this inadequacy, and part of his intellectual mission was to demonstrate, through his own engagement with the tradition, that Islamic thought was a genuine and sophisticated intellectual tradition that had made fundamental contributions to mathematics, natural philosophy, medicine, geography, history, jurisprudence, and philosophy.

The Islamic philosophical tradition begins in earnest with the translation movement of the eighth and ninth centuries, when Arab and Persian scholars undertook the systematic translation of Greek philosophical and scientific texts into Arabic, making the achievements of Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus, Euclid, Ptolemy, and Galen available to the Islamic world and beginning the process of engagement with Greek thought that would produce some of the most sophisticated philosophical work of the medieval period.

The great philosophers of the classical Islamic tradition, Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd, were engaged in the project of reconciling the rational philosophical tradition of the Greeks with the revealed tradition of the Quran, of showing that reason and revelation were not contradictory but complementary ways of approaching the same fundamental truths about reality. This project was not merely an academic exercise; it had profound implications for the understanding of what Islam was, of what human reason was capable of achieving in the domain of the divine, and of how the intellectual life of the Muslim community should be organized.

Razzaq engaged with this tradition at a high level of philosophical sophistication. He was not simply rehearsing the standard biographical summaries of the great Islamic philosophers; he was engaging with the specific philosophical arguments they had made and with the questions those arguments raised about the relationship between reason and revelation, between philosophy and jurisprudence, between the universal claims of rational inquiry and the particular claims of a specific religious tradition.

Al-Farabi and the Philosophy of the Ideal State

Among the classical Islamic philosophers, Al-Farabi (872-950) held a particular fascination for Razzaq, and the reasons for this fascination illuminate important dimensions of Razzaq's political philosophy. Al-Farabi was, above all, a political philosopher, whose engagement with Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Politics produced a vision of the ideal Islamic state that was one of the most ambitious and most sophisticated contributions to Islamic political philosophy.

Al-Farabi's ideal state was a community organized around the pursuit of the highest human good, understood as philosophical contemplation, under the guidance of a philosopher-ruler who combined the wisdom of the philosopher with the prophetic authority necessary to translate philosophical truth into practical political guidance for the community as a whole. This vision drew on Plato's philosopher-king but adapted it to the specific context of the Islamic community, in which the revelation of the Quran provided a form of access to divine truth that was not available through human philosophical inquiry alone.

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What Razzaq found interesting in Al-Farabi's political philosophy was not the specific institutional prescription for the philosopher-ruler, which was obviously inapplicable to the conditions of modern democratic politics, but the deeper philosophical question it raised about the relationship between philosophical wisdom and political authority. Al-Farabi's question, how can a political community be organized in a way that promotes the highest human development of its members, and what kind of political authority is required for this purpose, is a question that remains at the heart of political philosophy regardless of the specific answers different traditions have proposed.

Razzaq's engagement with this question, refracted through Al-Farabi, shaped his understanding of what political education required and why the cultivation of genuine philosophical capacity in the political class was a matter of political necessity rather than merely of intellectual luxury. The politician who had been formed by serious philosophical engagement with the fundamental questions of political life was, in his view, a fundamentally better politician than the politician who had not been so formed, not because the philosophical training provided specific policy prescriptions but because it cultivated the analytical capacity, the historical depth, and the normative seriousness that good political judgment requires.

Ibn Sina and the Question of the Soul

Ibn Sina (980-1037), known in the European tradition as Avicenna, was the most comprehensive and most systematic of the Islamic philosophers, producing encyclopedic works in medicine, natural philosophy, mathematics, and philosophy that were translated into Latin and exercised an enormous influence on European scholastic philosophy. His philosophical work includes sustained treatments of metaphysics, psychology, logic, and political philosophy, and his synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy with Neoplatonist elements and Islamic theological concerns represents one of the great intellectual achievements of the medieval world.

Razzaq's engagement with Ibn Sina focused particularly on his philosophy of the soul, his account of human consciousness and its relationship to the body and to the divine, and on the implications of that account for understanding what human beings are and what they are capable of. Ibn Sina's famous "flying man" thought experiment, in which he asks us to imagine a human being created in a state of sensory deprivation, floating in space with no contact with the external world, and argues that this being would nonetheless be aware of its own existence, its own self, constitutes one of the earliest clear formulations in the history of philosophy of the cogito argument that Descartes would later make famous.

This argument about the irreducibility of self-consciousness, about the fact that the awareness of one's own existence is not derived from sensory experience but is immediate and self-evident, had implications for Razzaq's understanding of the relationship between individual intellectual life and the social and political conditions of that life. If the self is irreducibly individual, if there is a dimension of human consciousness that is not reducible to social position or historical conditioning, then the cultivation of that dimension of human experience is itself a political project, an essential component of the kind of human flourishing that political institutions ought to promote.

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Ibn Rushd and the Problem of Averroism

Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), known in Europe as Averroes, was the philosopher who most directly challenged the synthesis of philosophy and Islamic theology that his predecessors had constructed, and his challenge had consequences that extended far beyond the Islamic world. His commentaries on Aristotle, which were translated into Latin in the thirteenth century, introduced Western scholastic philosophy to a much more thorough and accurate understanding of Aristotle than had previously been available, and his philosophical positions, particularly his doctrine of the eternity of the world and his position on the relationship between philosophical and theological truth, generated one of the most important intellectual controversies of the medieval period.

The Averroist controversy, the debate about the status of philosophical reason in relation to theological authority that Ibn Rushd's work precipitated in both Islamic and Christian philosophy, was of particular interest to Razzaq because it raised, in a historical context, the same fundamental question that the relationship between secular reason and Islamic authority raised in the context of twentieth-century South Asian Muslim politics. Ibn Rushd's position, that philosophical inquiry and theological authority operated in distinct but equally valid domains, that the conclusions of philosophical reason were not to be judged by their compatibility with theological doctrine but by the standards of rational argument, was a form of what we might call intellectual secularism within the Islamic tradition: an insistence on the autonomy of reason within its own domain.

This position was condemned by Al-Ghazali, whose Incoherence of the Philosophers attacked the philosophical tradition for its alleged incompatibility with Islamic theological doctrine, and the condemnation of philosophy in the mainstream Sunni Islamic tradition that followed Al-Ghazali's attack is often cited as a turning point in the history of Islamic intellectual life, the beginning of a period in which the tradition of free philosophical inquiry was increasingly marginalized in favour of legal and theological discourse.

Razzaq's engagement with this controversy was not merely historical. He was interested in the question of whether the closure of the Islamic intellectual tradition that followed Al-Ghazali's attack was necessary and inevitable, whether it reflected something in the nature of Islamic theology that was incompatible with the free exercise of philosophical reason, or whether it was a historically contingent development that could be, and needed to be, reversed. His engagement with the tradition of Islamic modernism, which sought to reopen the question of the relationship between reason and revelation and to recover the rationalist tradition within Islam, reflected his conviction that the Averroist tradition represented resources within the Islamic intellectual heritage that were essential for the project of adapting Islamic thought to the conditions of modernity.

Chapter Three: Ibn Khaldun and the Science of Civilization

The Greatest Social Scientist Before Modernity

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Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) occupies a unique position in the history of social thought: he is the author of what many scholars have described as the most ambitious and most original attempt, before the emergence of modern social science in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to develop a systematic and empirical science of human society. His Muqaddimah, the prolegomenon to his universal history, sets out a comprehensive theory of civilization, of the dynamics of social cohesion and political power, of the relationship between nomadic and settled societies, of the economic foundations of political authority, and of the cyclical patterns of civilizational rise and decline, that anticipates in remarkable ways the concerns and the methods of modern sociology, political science, and economics.

Razzaq's sustained engagement with Ibn Khaldun was one of the most distinctive and most interesting dimensions of his intellectual life. He was not alone among South Asian intellectuals in appreciating Ibn Khaldun's significance; figures like Muhammad Iqbal and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had also engaged with his work. But Razzaq's engagement was distinguished by its analytical specificity, by the degree to which he actually applied Ibn Khaldunian categories and analytical frameworks to the specific political and social conditions of South Asia, rather than merely citing Ibn Khaldun as an authority or invoking his name as a legitimizing reference.

Asabiyyah and South Asian Politics

The central analytical concept of Ibn Khaldun's social theory is asabiyyah, a term that is notoriously difficult to translate because the English equivalents, group feeling, social solidarity, tribal solidarity, and esprit de corps have all been used, capture only partial aspects of what Ibn Khaldun means. Asabiyyah is the quality of social cohesion that makes a group capable of collective action, of mutual support, of the kind of coordinated behaviour that is necessary for military effectiveness, political organisation, and the building and maintenance of civilization. It is grounded in shared experience, in mutual loyalty developed through the pressure of common circumstances, and it declines as groups achieve prosperity and the softening effects of settled civilized life erode the original toughness and solidarity of the tribal bond.

Ibn Khaldun's theory of history is built on the dynamics of asabiyyah: the groups with the strongest asabiyyah are able to seize power, build states, and establish dynasties; over time, their asabiyyah is weakened by the luxury and the internal conflicts that successful state-building brings; a new group with stronger asabiyyah arises from the periphery of civilization and overthrows the existing dynasty, beginning the cycle again. This is, in outline, a cyclical theory of political history that was remarkably prescient about the actual patterns of state formation and state collapse that historians have documented in the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond.

Razzaq applied the concept of asabiyyah to the analysis of South Asian political dynamics with great analytical acuity. He used it to explain the specific patterns of political cohesion and fragmentation that characterised the politics of British India and later of Pakistan and Bangladesh: the ways in which political movements built on a form of group solidarity, whether religious, linguistic, regional, or ideological, that was capable of generating powerful political mobilisation but that also contained within it the seeds of its own fragmentation as success brought the conflicts of interest that solidarity in adversity had suppressed.

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His analysis of the Bangladesh independence movement in these terms is particularly illuminating. The remarkable cohesion of the Bengali political community in the face of Pakistani military oppression, the extraordinary degree of mutual solidarity and collective action that the liberation war generated, represented a form of asabiyyah of exceptional strength. But Razzaq's analysis, informed by Ibn Khaldun, predicted that this asabiyyah would not survive the transition to successful state-building, that the solidarity forged in adversity would give way to the conflicts of interest and the competition for power that the achievement of independence made possible. The accuracy of this prediction, demonstrated by the rapid fragmentation of the political unity of the independence movement in the years following 1971, is one of the most striking confirmations of the analytical power of Ibn Khaldunian social theory when applied to South Asian conditions.

The Economic Theory of Civilization

Ibn Khaldun's economic theory, embedded within his broader theory of civilization, is another dimension of his work that Razzaq found particularly interesting and particularly applicable to the analysis of Bengal. Ibn Khaldun argued that economic prosperity was both the result and the cause of the development of civilization: prosperous societies developed the specialization of labor, the division of tasks, and the commercial exchange that made sophisticated cultural and intellectual production possible, and sophisticated cultural and intellectual production in turn made the economic activities of a prosperous society more productive and more creative.

But Ibn Khaldun also recognised the paradoxical character of economic prosperity: the very wealth that civilization creates tends to corrupt the social solidarity and the moral vigor that made civilization possible in the first place, generating luxury, inequality, internal conflict, and the kind of political decay that makes the civilization vulnerable to conquest by groups with less wealth but more solidarity. This is a diagnosis of civilizational self-destruction through success that has remarkable resonances with contemporary concerns about the social effects of economic inequality and the political dangers of concentrated wealth.

Razzaq's application of this framework to the specific economic history of Bengal was one of his most original intellectual contributions. He used Ibn Khaldunian categories to analyse the specific dynamics of Bengal's economic history: the development of the extraordinary commercial and manufacturing civilization of pre-colonial Bengal, its destruction by British economic policy, the impoverishment and social disintegration that followed, and the specific forms of social solidarity and economic organisation that survived and that provided the resources for economic reconstruction in the independent state.

This application of medieval Islamic social theory to the analysis of modern South Asian economic history is not merely eclectic; it reflects a genuine insight about the limitations of purely European analytical frameworks for understanding Asian economic experience, and it anticipates the kind of methodological pluralism that the most sophisticated contemporary development economics, with its emphasis on historically specific and contextually sensitive analysis, has increasingly come to recognize as necessary.

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Chapter Four: The Hindu Philosophical Tradition and Razzaq's Engagement with It

A Muslim Who Read the Vedanta

One of the most intellectually remarkable features of Razzaq's intellectual formation was his sustained and serious engagement with the Hindu philosophical tradition. For a Bengali Muslim intellectual of his generation, this engagement was not automatic or expected; the religious politics of the partition era and its aftermath created significant barriers between the Muslim and Hindu intellectual traditions in Bengal, and many Muslim intellectuals of Razzaq's generation engaged with the Hindu tradition only superficially or defensively, either dismissing it as irrelevant to Muslim concerns or engaging with it primarily to identify its differences from and alleged inferiorities to the Islamic tradition.

Razzaq's engagement was of a fundamentally different character. He read the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the major texts of the Vedanta school, the works of Ramanuja and Sankara, and the modern representatives of the Hindu philosophical tradition including Vivekananda and Aurobindo, with the same combination of critical respect and analytical engagement that he brought to all intellectual traditions. He was interested not in using the Hindu tradition as a foil to demonstrate the superiority of Islamic thought but in understanding what the Hindu philosophical tradition had actually achieved and what it could contribute to the broader project of thinking about the fundamental questions of human existence.

The Advaita Vedanta and the Question of the Self

The Advaita Vedanta tradition, the non-dualist school of Hindu philosophy most fully developed by Adi Sankara in the eighth century of the common era, holds that the ultimate nature of reality is a single, undivided consciousness, Brahman, and that the apparent multiplicity of individual selves and of the physical world is the product of maya, a term that is usually translated as illusion but that is better understood as a kind of fundamental misperception or mispresentation of the true nature of reality. The individual self, Atman, is, at the deepest level of analysis, identical with Brahman: the apparent separation of the individual from the universal is not a fundamental fact about reality but a feature of the ordinary consciousness that genuine philosophical insight can transcend.

Razzaq's engagement with Advaita Vedanta was not primarily theological; he was not interested in debating the truth of the Vedantic metaphysics or in comparing it with Islamic metaphysics on the question of the relationship between the individual soul and the divine. His interest was rather epistemological and political. He found in Advaita Vedanta a sophisticated tradition of reflective inquiry into the nature of consciousness and the self that raised philosophical questions of genuine depth and that generated methodological insights applicable to the analysis of social and political life.

In particular, he found in the Vedantic tradition a sophisticated account of the relationship between the immediate, unreflective experience of ordinary consciousness and the deeper understanding that philosophical reflection can produce, an account that paralleled in interesting ways the Socratic account of the relationship between opinion and knowledge and the Marxist

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account of the relationship between ideology and genuine social understanding. The Vedantic claim that ordinary consciousness is systematically distorted by maya, by a fundamental misrepresentation of the nature of reality, was for Razzaq a philosophical articulation of the insight, which he shared with Marx and with the Frankfurt School tradition of critical theory, that the social world as ordinarily experienced conceals as much as it reveals about the actual conditions of social existence.

The Bhagavad Gita and the Ethics of Action

Razzaq's engagement with the Bhagavad Gita was more directly related to his political and ethical thinking. The Gita, which is set within the great war narrative of the Mahabharata, presents a dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and the god Krishna on the eve of a catastrophic battle. Arjuna is paralyzed by the recognition that he must fight and kill members of his own family and community, and the dialogue consists of Krishna's response to Arjuna's moral paralysis, a response that develops one of the most sophisticated accounts in world philosophy of the relationship between duty, action, and the moral consequences of action.

Krishna's central teaching in the Gita is the doctrine of nishkama karma, the performance of action without attachment to its fruits. The warrior who fights because it is his duty to fight, without being motivated by personal desire for the outcome or by fear of personal consequences, acts rightly regardless of the actual consequences of his action. This doctrine has been interpreted in many ways, from the conservative reading that sees it as a justification for the acceptance of one's social role and its obligations without questioning, to the more progressive reading that sees it as a teaching about the psychology of effective action, about how the most effective agents are those who are not distracted from the requirements of the moment by anxious calculation of personal advantage.

Razzaq found the Gita's ethical analysis particularly interesting in connection with the specific political and intellectual challenges that he was addressing. The question of how to act effectively in the political world, without being paralyzed by the complexity of the moral situation or distorted by the temptations of personal advantage, was for him a live practical question as well as a philosophical one. The Gita's teaching about disinterested action, about the cultivation of the capacity to do what the situation requires without being driven by personal ambition or personal fear, resonated with his own understanding of what intellectual and political integrity required.

Chapter Five: The Buddhist Tradition and Razzaq's Comparative Philosophy

The Buddha and the Bengal Connection

Buddhism has a particular significance in the intellectual history of Bengal that is sometimes overlooked in discussions of Bengali cultural identity that emphasise the Hindu and Islamic traditions. Before the Islamic conquest of Bengal in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Bengal delta was a major centre of Buddhist civilization, home to some of the most important

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monastic universities of the ancient world, including Nalanda and Vikramashila, which attracted scholars from across Asia and played a crucial role in the transmission of Buddhist philosophy to Tibet, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

This Buddhist past is not merely ancient history for the understanding of Bengali civilization; it is an essential component of the civilizational substrate on which later Hindu and Islamic cultural achievements were built. The specific forms of popular religiosity, the artistic traditions, the philosophical sensibilities, and the social practices of Bengal all bear the marks of this Buddhist heritage, even in communities that have been formally Hindu or Muslim for centuries. Razzaq was aware of this historical depth, and his engagement with the Buddhist philosophical tradition was partly motivated by the desire to understand the civilizational foundations of Bengal in their full complexity.

The Dharma and Political Philosophy

The Buddhist concept of dharma, which encompasses law, duty, moral order, and the natural tendency of things, is one of the foundational concepts of South Asian political philosophy, and its relationship to the political thought of both the Hindu and the Islamic traditions is complex and important. Razzaq's engagement with the dharma concept was oriented toward understanding how the specifically South Asian conception of political authority as grounded in moral order, in the ruler's duty to uphold dharma, related to the Islamic conception of political authority as grounded in the divine law revealed through the Prophet, and to the modern democratic conception of political authority as grounded in the consent of the governed.

His analysis suggested that, beneath the theological differences between these traditions, there were shared concerns about the relationship between political authority and moral order that pointed toward common ground. All three traditions insisted, in their different ways, that political authority was not simply the exercise of power but the discharge of a moral responsibility, that the legitimate ruler was one who used power in accordance with standards that transcended mere self-interest or factional advantage. This shared concern provided, in Razzaq's analysis, a basis for political thought that was genuinely rooted in the civilizational traditions of South Asia while also being compatible with the democratic values of the modern world.

Nagarjuna and the Philosophy of Emptiness

Among the Buddhist philosophical thinkers, Nagarjuna (approximately 150-250 CE) held a particular fascination for Razzaq because of the extraordinary philosophical sophistication of his Madhyamaka school and its implications for the understanding of the relationship between thought and reality, between the conceptual frameworks through which we understand the world and the world itself. Nagarjuna's central doctrine of sunyata, the emptiness of all phenomena, is a philosophical position of great subtlety that resists reduction to simple summary, but its essential claim is that all phenomena, including the concepts through which we understand phenomena, lack inherent, independent existence and are instead constituted through their relationships with other phenomena.

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This doctrine has profound epistemological implications. It suggests that the conceptual frameworks through which we understand reality are not transparent windows onto an independently existing world but constructions that shape what we see by determining what relations we attend to and what we treat as significant. The insight that our conceptual frameworks are themselves constructed, that there is no view from nowhere that allows us to see the world as it is independent of any particular perspective, is one that Razzaq found extraordinarily resonant with the methodological challenges of social and political analysis.

His engagement with Nagarjunian philosophy was, in this respect, a philosophical engagement with the problems of social science methodology, with the question of how the analyst of political and social life can achieve genuine understanding of the phenomena being studied while recognizing that the analytical frameworks being applied are themselves historically and culturally specific constructions rather than universal instruments of transparent inquiry. This is a question that has become central to the philosophy of social science in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in the debates between positivism, hermeneutics, and critical theory, and Razzaq's engagement with it through the medium of Buddhist philosophy rather than through the European philosophical tradition is a good example of the kind of cross-civilizational intellectual fertilization that his comparative approach made possible.

Chapter Six: The Confucian Tradition and Razzaq's East Asian Analysis

China as Mirror and as Challenge

Razzaq's engagement with the Confucian intellectual tradition of China was motivated, as noted in Part Four of this textbook, partly by the intellectual fascination that the Chinese civilizational achievement held for him and partly by the analytical value of the Chinese case as a comparative reference point for understanding the specific dynamics of South Asian civilizational development. But his engagement went beyond the merely instrumental; he found in Confucian philosophy resources for thinking about the relationship between education, virtue, and political authority that were genuinely illuminating in their own right and that resonated in important ways with his own understanding of the intellectual and moral foundations of good governance.

The Confucian tradition, founded by Confucius (551-479 BCE) and developed through centuries of philosophical commentary and institutional elaboration, places education and the cultivation of virtue at the center of its political philosophy. The Confucian ideal of the junzi, the exemplary person or gentleman, whose moral cultivation and breadth of learning qualify him for political leadership, is a vision of political authority grounded in moral and intellectual achievement rather than in hereditary status or the exercise of military power. The political implications of this vision are radical in a specific and important sense: they imply that the legitimate exercise of political authority requires genuine moral and intellectual qualifications, and that political authority that is exercised without those qualifications is illegitimate, however formally established it may be.

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Razzaq's engagement with this Confucian vision is particularly interesting in the context of his own educational practice. His conviction that the most important contribution an intellectual could make to the political life of a community was the cultivation of genuine intellectual and moral capacity in those who would exercise political authority reflects a Confucian sensibility that is at once distinctive to the East Asian intellectual tradition and resonant with the philosophical traditions of South Asia and of ancient Greece. The image of the teacher as the cultivator of moral and intellectual excellence in those who will govern is one that runs through multiple philosophical traditions and that Razzaq embodied with a degree of consistency and discipline that makes the comparison meaningful.

The Rectification of Names and the Problem of Political Language

One of the most interesting and most practically relevant dimensions of Confucian political philosophy is the doctrine of zhengming, the rectification of names, which Confucius identified as the first requirement of good governance. When asked what he would do first if given the opportunity to govern, Confucius replied that he would rectify the names: by which he meant that the accurate use of political language, the naming of things as they actually are rather than as political convenience would have them appear, was a necessary precondition for the effective exercise of political authority.

This doctrine has a political philosophy of considerable sophistication behind it. The claim is not merely that accurate language is instrumentally useful for clear communication but that the corruption of political language is itself a form of political corruption, that a political culture in which words mean whatever those in power want them to mean is a political culture in which genuine governance is impossible because the information necessary for good decisions has been systematically corrupted. The rectification of names is not merely a linguistic programme but a political and moral programme: the insistence that political reality must be described as it actually is, regardless of the political inconvenience of accurate description.

Razzaq found this doctrine deeply congenial to his own intellectual practice. His commitment to calling things as he saw them, to describing political reality in accurate terms even when the accurate description was politically inconvenient or socially uncomfortable, reflected a Confucian sensibility about the relationship between intellectual integrity and political health. The Chinese and the Bengali intellectual traditions converged, in his engagement with both, on the recognition that the corruption of language was the beginning of the corruption of governance and that the restoration of genuine discourse was a political as well as an intellectual necessity.

Chapter Seven: Razzaq and Islamic Jurisprudence - Fiqh, Ijtihad, and the Constitutional Challenge

The Structure of Islamic Legal Thought

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Islamic jurisprudence, the discipline of fiqh, is one of the most sophisticated legal traditions in the history of human civilization. Developed over more than twelve centuries by generations of legal scholars working across the vast geographical and cultural expanse of the Islamic world, the fiqh tradition has produced a body of legal doctrine of extraordinary breadth and complexity, addressing questions of ritual practice, personal status, commercial transactions, criminal law, constitutional theory, and international relations with a degree of analytical sophistication that deserves far more serious attention from comparative legal scholars than it typically receives.

The foundational sources of Islamic law are the Quran, the holy scripture of Islam, and the Sunna, the recorded practice and saying of the Prophet Muhammad. These foundational sources are supplemented by ijma, the consensus of the legal scholars, and qiyas, analogical reasoning, and by the specific traditions of the four major Sunni legal schools, the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, and Hanbali schools, each of which has developed its own specific methodologies and doctrines while remaining within the broader framework of Islamic jurisprudence.

Razzaq's engagement with the fiqh tradition was serious and sustained, grounded in his deep reading in Arabic and Persian and in his broader engagement with the Islamic intellectual tradition. But his approach was not that of a traditional jurist; it was the approach of a political philosopher and a historian who was interested in the fiqh tradition as a legal and political achievement, as an example of how a specific intellectual tradition had developed systematic approaches to the problem of how to organize collective human life in accordance with moral and religious principles.

Ijtihad and the Challenge of Modernity

The concept of ijtihad, the exercise of independent legal reasoning, is one of the most important and most contested in the history of Islamic jurisprudence. In the early period of Islamic legal development, ijtihad was freely exercised by legal scholars who applied their individual reasoning to the foundational sources of law in order to develop legal rulings appropriate to the specific circumstances they faced. But as the legal tradition matured and the major legal schools became established, there developed what Muslim legal scholars referred to as the closing of the door of ijtihad, the idea that the major questions of Islamic law had been definitively settled by the founders of the legal schools and that subsequent jurists were bound to follow the established doctrines of their school rather than exercising independent reasoning.

The question of whether the door of ijtihad was ever definitively closed, and what it would mean to reopen it in the context of modern legal challenges that the classical jurists could not have anticipated, has been one of the central debates in Islamic intellectual life since the nineteenth century. The Islamic modernist tradition, represented by figures like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad Iqbal, and more recently by scholars like Fazlur Rahman and Abdullahi an-Naim, has argued consistently that the exercise of genuine ijtihad, the independent application of the foundational principles of Islamic law to the specific circumstances of the modern world, is both legitimate and necessary.

Razzaq's position on this question was clearly aligned with the modernist tradition. He believed that the Islamic legal tradition contained, within itself, the resources for adaptation to the

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conditions of modernity, and that the exercise of ijtihad was not a concession to modernity but an authentic expression of the dynamic and reasoning character of the Islamic legal methodology at its best. He was critical of the kind of legal conservatism that treated the doctrines of the classical legal schools as definitive and unchangeable, not because he dismissed the achievement of the classical jurists but because he believed that their own intellectual method demanded ongoing engagement with new circumstances rather than the mechanical application of settled doctrine.

The Constitutional Implications

The implications of Razzaq's approach to Islamic jurisprudence for constitutional theory in Bangladesh were complex and politically sensitive. The question of the relationship between Islamic law and the constitutional framework of a Muslim-majority state is one of the central challenges of contemporary constitutional design in the Muslim world, and the different answers that different Muslim-majority states have given to this question, from the pure Islamic Republic model of Iran to the explicitly secular model of Turkey (pre-2002) to the various intermediate models of Pakistan, Egypt, Malaysia, and Indonesia, reflect the full range of possible relationships between Islamic legal tradition and modern constitutional government.

Razzaq's position, as reconstructed from the accounts of his conversations and the implications of his broader intellectual framework, was one of principled pluralism. He believed that the constitutional framework of Bangladesh needed to protect the religious freedom of all citizens, including the freedom of the Muslim majority to live in accordance with their religious values and commitments, while also protecting the rights of religious minorities and maintaining the democratic political framework that required equal citizenship regardless of religious identity. This meant that Islamic law could and should govern the personal status domain, matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and family relations within the Muslim community, while the public constitutional framework remained explicitly secular and equally applicable to all citizens regardless of their religious affiliation.

This position, which is sometimes described as the secular state with religious accommodation or the pluralist constitutionalism model, was not a comfortable one from the perspective of either Islamic conservatives or secular ideologues. Islamic conservatives objected that it relegated Islam to the private sphere and denied it the public political expression that they believed the divine law required. Secular ideologues objected that even the partial accommodation of Islamic law in the domain of personal status created a form of legal discrimination and maintained a religious authority over private life that conflicted with the principles of liberal individual autonomy.

Razzaq's response to both sets of objections was grounded in his historical analysis. He argued that the accommodation of religious law in the domain of personal status was not a concession to theocracy but a recognition of the genuine diversity of the Bangladeshi population and of the legitimate interest of the Muslim community in organizing their family life in accordance with their religious values. He argued, equally, that the maintenance of a secular public constitutional framework was not an imposition of Western secular values but a necessary condition for the equal citizenship of Bangladesh's religious minorities and for the kind of pluralistic national identity that the specific history of the Bengal delta had produced.

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Chapter Eight: Constitutional Law and the Architecture of the Postcolonial State

The Inheritance and Its Problems

The constitutional law that Bangladesh inherited at independence was, like most dimensions of its institutional inheritance, a complex and ambiguous legacy. The British Indian constitutional tradition, developed through a series of Government of India Acts from 1858 through 1935, and then given a comprehensive expression in the Indian Constitution of 1950 that Bangladesh's constitution-makers drew upon heavily, was a tradition with genuine achievements and genuine limitations.

Its achievements included the development of sophisticated mechanisms for the protection of fundamental rights through judicial review, the articulation of a framework for federal or quasi-federal governance in the context of a diverse and geographically complex polity, the establishment of a professional judicial tradition with a degree of independence from the executive that was genuinely meaningful, and the creation of a civil service tradition with a degree of professional competence and institutional integrity that, however imperfect, provided at least a minimal framework for effective governance.

Its limitations were equally significant. The constitutional tradition of British India was designed for the governance of a colonial territory rather than for the promotion of genuine democratic self-governance. Its federal provisions were designed to manage diversity in a way that served imperial control rather than to promote genuine political autonomy. Its fundamental rights provisions were frequently overridden by emergency powers that gave the executive the authority to suspend constitutional protections without judicial oversight. And the entire constitutional edifice was built on assumptions about the governance of a subject population that were fundamentally incompatible with the democratic self-governance that independent Bangladesh aspired to.

Razzaq's Constitutional Vision

Razzaq's contribution to the development of a constitutional vision for Bangladesh was, as has been discussed in previous parts of this textbook, made primarily through the intellectual formation of the constitution-makers rather than through direct participation in the constitutional drafting process. But the content of that vision can be reconstructed from the accounts of his conversations, from the implications of his broader political philosophy, and from the pattern of his influence on the constitutional thinking of his students.

The constitutional vision that emerges from this reconstruction is one that combines several elements that are not always found together in constitutional theory. It combines a strong commitment to democratic political institutions and to the fundamental rights of citizens with a recognition of the importance of social and economic rights, including rights to education, health, and economic security, that the purely procedural democratic tradition sometimes neglects. It combines a commitment to the independence of the judiciary and to the rule of law

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with a recognition that law is not self-executing but requires the political will and the institutional capacity to implement it effectively. And it combines a commitment to national unity and the strong central state with a recognition of the importance of local governance and of the political participation of local communities in decisions that directly affect their lives.

This vision has important tensions within it, and it is not clear that Razzaq had fully worked out how these tensions were to be resolved in specific constitutional provisions. The tension between the strong central state that effective national governance requires and the local self-governance that genuine democratic participation demands is one of the oldest problems of constitutional design, and it has been addressed differently in different constitutional traditions without any single solution having clearly established itself as optimal. Razzaq's framework identified the tension correctly but did not provide a specific constitutional answer to it.

The Question of Emergency Powers

One of the most important and most practically consequential dimensions of constitutional design in postcolonial states is the treatment of emergency powers, the constitutional provisions that allow the executive to suspend normal legal protections and to concentrate authority in its own hands in circumstances of genuine national emergency. The abuse of emergency powers has been one of the most common mechanisms of constitutional breakdown in postcolonial states: governments that came to power through democratic elections have repeatedly used emergency provisions to suspend democracy indefinitely, and the formal constitutional permission for emergency rule has provided a cloak of constitutional legitimacy for what are, in substance, coups against the democratic order.

Razzaq was deeply aware of this pattern, which his analysis of South Asian political history had documented with disturbing frequency. His analysis of the structural risks of democratic breakdown in postcolonial states placed particular emphasis on the danger of emergency powers, on the need for constitutional provisions that limited the scope and the duration of emergency rule and that provided effective mechanisms for judicial review of emergency declarations.

The 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh included emergency provisions that were, in retrospect, too broad and too easily invoked. The subsequent amendments to the constitution that further expanded the scope of emergency rule, and the actual invocations of emergency powers by successive governments, demonstrated exactly the pattern of constitutional abuse that Razzaq's analysis had identified as the primary risk of inadequate emergency provisions.

The constitutional history of emergency rule in Bangladesh, from the Mujib government's use of the Special Powers Act to the military regimes' resort to martial law to the more recent uses of emergency declarations in the twenty-first century, constitutes one of the most important case studies in the failure of postcolonial constitutional design, and it is a case study that can be most productively analysed through the framework that Razzaq's constitutional analysis established.

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Chapter Nine: Political Economy, Development, and the Question of Bangladesh's Economic Model

The Debate About Bangladesh's Economic Miracle

Bangladesh's economic development over the past three decades has been widely described as a miracle or near-miracle: a country that at independence was widely predicted to be a basket case of dependency and underdevelopment has achieved sustained economic growth, dramatic reductions in poverty, significant improvements in health outcomes, and remarkable advances in gender equality that have surprised most development economists and have generated a substantial scholarly literature attempting to explain what Bangladesh did right.

This literature, which includes works by Naomi Hossain, Mushtaq Khan, Selim Raihan, Binayak Sen, and many others, has identified several factors that contribute to the explanation: the role of the garment industry and remittances in generating foreign exchange and employment, the success of microfinance institutions and particularly the Grameen Bank in extending credit to the rural poor, the effectiveness of several major development programmes in improving health and education outcomes, and the specific social conditions of Bangladesh that made these interventions effective.

The connection between Razzaq's economic analysis and Bangladesh's actual development trajectory is not straightforward, and it would be misleading to claim that Bangladesh's development success represents a vindication of his specific prescriptions. But there are elements of the Bangladesh development experience that are consistent with the analytical framework he had developed, and understanding these connections illuminates both the insight and the limitations of his economic thinking.

The Garment Industry and the Commercial Tradition

Bangladesh's emergence as one of the world's largest exporters of readymade garments, employing predominantly female workers from rural backgrounds and generating a substantial share of the country's export earnings, is a development that Razzaq's economic analysis would have found both expected and surprising. The expected dimension is that a country with a tradition of sophisticated textile manufacturing, with a skilled artisan class and commercial networks oriented toward export markets, should find a comparative advantage in the production of textiles for global markets. The historical pattern that he had identified, in which Bengal's commercial and manufacturing traditions had been destroyed by colonial policy and needed to be rebuilt by an independent government pursuing appropriate policies, pointed toward the potential for exactly this kind of development.

The surprising dimension is the specific form that this development took, through the integration of Bangladesh into the global supply chains of the multinational fashion industry rather than through the development of indigenous fashion brands and domestically owned manufacturing capacity. This form of integration has generated significant economic benefits, in terms of employment, foreign exchange earnings, and the empowerment of women workers, but it has also created a significant structural vulnerability, in which Bangladesh's economic development

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is dependent on decisions made by global corporations whose priorities are not aligned with Bangladesh's long-term development interests.

Razzaq's analysis of the colonial economic order and its distortions, his insistence that genuine economic development required the development of indigenous commercial and manufacturing capacity rather than simply integration into externally controlled production networks, would have led him to a more ambivalent assessment of the garment industry model than the straightforward celebration of it that much of the development literature has offered.

The Grameen Bank and Social Capital

The success of the Grameen Bank and the broader microfinance movement in Bangladesh is another dimension of the development experience that has interesting connections to Razzaq's analytical framework. Muhammad Yunus, the founder of the Grameen Bank and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, developed the microfinance model in response to his observation that the rural poor of Bangladesh had both the capacity for economic initiative and the social solidarity necessary for collective credit management, but were excluded from formal financial markets by the requirements for collateral that they could not provide.

The social capital that the Grameen Bank model mobilizes, the networks of mutual accountability and mutual support within village communities that make the group lending model work, is a form of social solidarity that bears a strong resemblance to the asabiyyah that Ibn Khaldun had identified as the foundation of collective capacity for action. Razzaq's application of Ibn Khaldunian social theory to the analysis of Bengali social structure had pointed toward exactly this dimension of Bangladesh's social capital: the networks of mutual solidarity and collective action at the village level that had survived the colonial disruption of the larger-scale commercial and administrative structures and that provided the social infrastructure on which new forms of economic organisation could be built.

The microfinance model can, in this perspective, be understood as an application of a principle that Razzaq's analysis had pointed toward: that the appropriate basis for Bangladesh's economic development was not the imitation of foreign models but the mobilization of the specific social and economic resources that the Bangladeshi population possessed, building on the forms of social solidarity and the traditions of small-scale economic organisation that had survived the colonial period.

Chapter Ten: The Ecology of Thought - Razzaq, Environment, and Civilizational Sustainability

The Delta as Intellectual Framework

Razzaq's understanding of the Bengal delta as a distinctive ecological and civilizational space has been mentioned in previous parts of this textbook, but it deserves more sustained analytical attention because it constitutes one of the most original and most important dimensions of his

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intellectual contribution. His insistence on the ecological specificity of the Bengal delta, on the necessity of understanding the specific conditions of life in a river delta as the primary context within which all social, economic, and political analysis of Bangladesh must operate, anticipates by several decades the kind of ecological sensitivity that has only recently become a mainstream concern in development economics and political science.

The Bengal delta is, as noted earlier, one of the most ecologically distinctive and dynamic regions in the world. Its landscape is in continuous flux, as the great rivers that traverse it deposit silt, change course, create new land, and reclaim what was previously settled. The relationship of human communities to this dynamic landscape has produced, over millennia, a distinctive set of social practices, economic arrangements, and cultural sensibilities that are rooted in the specific ecological conditions of delta life.

Razzaq understood this ecological rootedness of Bengali civilization as a resource rather than as a limitation. The sophisticated agricultural practices that had developed in response to the specific conditions of the delta, the social institutions for managing water and flood risk, the commercial networks that had developed along the river routes, the artistic and literary traditions that reflected the distinctive aesthetics of a landscape of water and light: all of these were, in his analysis, genuine civilizational achievements that deserved to be understood and built upon rather than simply swept aside in the rush toward modernization.

Climate Change and the Vindication of Ecological Sensitivity

The contemporary challenge of climate change has given Razzaq's ecological sensitivity a new and urgent relevance. Bangladesh is among the countries most severely affected by climate change, with rising sea levels threatening its coastal areas, increasing intensity of cyclones and flooding causing enormous economic losses and human suffering, and changes in the patterns of rainfall and temperature affecting agricultural production across the delta. The Delta Plan 2100, developed by the Bangladeshi government with Dutch technical assistance in 2018, represents the most ambitious national response to the ecological challenges of the delta and reflects an approach to long-term planning that takes the ecological dynamics of the delta with the seriousness that Razzaq's analysis had always insisted upon.

The specific recommendations of the Delta Plan 2100, with its emphasis on working with rather than against the natural dynamics of the delta, on maintaining the ecological processes that sustain the delta's fertility and biodiversity while managing the risks of flood and sea-level rise, reflect the kind of ecologically sensitive approach to development that Razzaq's analysis had pointed toward. The plan's explicit recognition that the delta's ecological dynamics cannot be managed through purely engineering solutions, that the attempt to control the river system through embankments and drainage structures has often been counterproductive, and that a more adaptive and ecologically sensitive approach is necessary, echoes principles that were implicit in Razzaq's critique of conventional development economics.

The engagement of international climate scientists with the specific ecological challenges of Bangladesh, through institutions like the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) founded by Saleemul Huq and based in Dhaka, has generated a body of

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scientific and policy analysis that provides a contemporary scientific foundation for the kind of ecological sensitivity that Razzaq's intellectual framework demanded. The connection between his historical and civilizational analysis of the Bengal delta and the contemporary climate science of delta resilience is a genuine intellectual connection that deserves systematic scholarly exploration.

Chapter Eleven: The Sociology of Knowledge in Bangladesh - How Ideas Travel and Transform

The University as Intellectual Ecosystem

The University of Dhaka, where Razzaq spent essentially his entire academic career, has been the central institution of the Bangladeshi intellectual ecosystem for over a century, and understanding how that institution has functioned, how it has transmitted and transformed intellectual traditions, how it has responded to the political pressures of successive regimes, and how it has shaped the intellectual formation of the political, professional, and cultural leaders of Bangladesh, is essential to understanding how Razzaq's influence operated and what his legacy consists of.

The specific character of the University of Dhaka as an institution has changed significantly over the course of its history. In its early decades, from its founding in 1921 through the 1950s, it was a relatively small institution with a high concentration of intellectual talent among both faculty and students, and the intimacy of the intellectual community allowed for the kind of intense personal intellectual relationship between teachers and students that Razzaq's form of intellectual influence required. Students and faculty members knew each other, argued with each other, shared meals and evenings of conversation, and formed the kind of intellectual community in which ideas could develop and be transmitted through personal encounter.

The expansion of the university system in the post-independence period, the dramatic increase in the numbers of students and faculty, the development of new universities in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Jahangirnagar, and elsewhere, and the increasing professionalization and departmentalization of academic life: all of these changes have altered the conditions of intellectual life in ways that make the kind of influence that Razzaq exercised more difficult to sustain. The mass university is not a community of scholars in the same sense that the small university of Razzaq's early career was, and the conditions for the kind of personal intellectual formation that he cultivated are correspondingly less available.

The Role of the Press and Public Intellectuals

Razzaq's influence on Bangladeshi intellectual life was not confined to the university; it extended through the network of his former students who became journalists, editors, and public intellectuals into the broader domain of public discourse. The Bangladeshi press, particularly the Bengali-language press that includes publications like Prothom Alo, the Daily Star, and the

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literary and cultural journals, has been an important medium for the transmission of intellectual influence in a society where the reading public extends well beyond the university.

Former students of Razzaq who became journalists and editors brought to their work the analytical frameworks and the intellectual standards that his teaching had cultivated, and these standards shaped the quality of political analysis and cultural commentary that appeared in the publications they edited. The influence of this transmission is difficult to quantify but genuine, and it helps to explain the relatively high quality of public intellectual discourse in Bangladesh compared with many other countries at similar levels of economic development.

The tradition of the public intellectual, the figure who combines academic expertise with the capacity and the willingness to engage with a broad public on questions of general importance, has been central to Bangladeshi intellectual culture in ways that reflect Razzaq's own practice and his influence on those he trained. He was himself a public intellectual in the deepest sense, though not in the narrowly journalistic sense: a man whose intellectual engagement was always oriented toward the practical and political questions that faced his community, who never retreated into purely academic specialization, and who was always willing to speak clearly about difficult political realities to those who came to him seeking understanding.

Chapter Twelve: The Question of Tradition and Modernity - Razzaq's Synthesis

The False Dichotomy

One of the most pervasive intellectual errors in the discourse about postcolonial intellectual culture is the treatment of tradition and modernity as fundamentally opposed, as if the choice facing any postcolonial intellectual were simply between the uncritical embrace of indigenous tradition on one side and the uncritical adoption of Western modernity on the other. This dichotomy is false in multiple ways, and its falsity is something that Razzaq's intellectual practice demonstrated more clearly than any explicit argument could have done.

The dichotomy is false, first, because the traditions of Asian civilizations are not static, homogeneous, or unchanging. They are dynamic historical processes, in continuous evolution, full of internal diversity and internal conflict, capable of generating new responses to new challenges, and already containing within them the resources for the kind of critical self-examination that genuine intellectual life requires. The Hindu philosophical tradition, the Islamic intellectual tradition, the Confucian tradition, the Buddhist tradition: none of these is a monolithic entity that either must be accepted whole or rejected whole. Each of them is a rich, diverse, and internally contested tradition from which critical intelligence can draw selectively, taking what is genuinely valuable and challenging what is limited or distorted.

The dichotomy is false, second, because Western modernity is not a single, unified thing but a complex and internally diverse tradition with its own profound tensions and contradictions. The same European intellectual tradition that produced the ideology of racial hierarchy and imperial domination also produced the philosophy of human rights and democratic self-governance. The

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same economic system that generated colonial exploitation also produced the technological innovations that have dramatically improved material living standards for billions of people. The same positivist scientific tradition that was used to justify the colonial hierarchy of civilizations also generated the analytical tools that postcolonial intellectuals have used to deconstruct that hierarchy.

Razzaq's intellectual practice embodied the refusal of this false dichotomy in every dimension of its operation. He drew on Islamic philosophy and Hindu philosophical traditions and Confucian thought and European political philosophy with equal seriousness and equal critical discrimination, taking from each tradition what the specific question at hand required and not being constrained by any prior commitment to the superiority of any single tradition. He was, in the deepest sense, a comparativist: a man who believed that the question mattered more than the tradition, and that the appropriate response to any genuine intellectual question was to gather the best thinking about it from wherever that thinking had been done.

The Synthesis and Its Implications

The synthesis that emerges from Razzaq's intellectual practice, from the pattern of his reading, his teaching, and his conversational engagement with the questions that preoccupied him, is not a neat philosophical system. It is something more interesting and more honest: an intellectual orientation, a set of methodological commitments and normative values, that determines how to approach questions rather than what conclusions to reach.

That orientation is characterized by several distinctive features. It is historical in its fundamental approach, insisting that any adequate analysis of political and social phenomena must be grounded in the specific historical conditions of those phenomena rather than derived from universal principles applied without reference to historical context. It is comparative in its methodology, insisting that understanding any specific phenomenon requires comparison with other cases, other civilizations, other historical experiences that illuminate what is specific and what is general about the case under analysis. It is critical in its epistemological stance, insisting on the examination of one's own assumptions and on the willingness to revise conclusions in the light of evidence regardless of the intellectual or political investment one may have made in those conclusions.

And it is democratic in its normative commitments, insisting that political authority must be grounded in the consent of the governed and accountable to the governed through genuine democratic institutions, and that this democratic requirement is not a Western cultural imposition but a universal condition of political legitimacy that the intellectual traditions of multiple civilizations, approached with sufficient depth and critical discrimination, can be shown to support.

Chapter Thirteen: The Legacy of Oral Teaching - Pedagogy as Philosophical Commitment

What Teaching Through Conversation Achieves

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The pedagogical practice of teaching through conversation, which Razzaq elevated to a fine art through decades of consistent practice, achieves things that formal academic instruction through lectures and published texts cannot achieve, and understanding what those things are is essential to understanding why his intellectual influence was as deep and as pervasive as it was.

The most fundamental thing that genuine Socratic conversation achieves is the cultivation of the capacity for genuine questioning. Most formal academic instruction teaches students what to think: what the established positions are, what the accepted frameworks of analysis are, what the correct answers to the questions posed by examinations are. Genuine Socratic conversation teaches students how to think: how to formulate questions precisely, how to examine the assumptions that underlie the questions one asks, how to distinguish genuine understanding from the mere possession of information, how to follow an argument wherever it leads even when the destination is uncomfortable.

This capacity for genuine questioning is, in Razzaq's understanding and in the Socratic tradition to which he consciously belonged, the foundation of intellectual integrity and the prerequisite for effective political judgment. The politician who has been trained to question, who has been taught to examine the assumptions of the positions put to him and to resist the blandishments of ideological simplification, is a fundamentally better politician than the one who has not been so trained. The judge who has been trained to question, to examine the assumptions of legal arguments and to ask what genuine justice requires rather than what the letter of the law technically permits, is a fundamentally better judge. The economist who has been trained to question, to examine the assumptions of the models being applied and to ask what the specific historical conditions of the case under analysis actually require, is a fundamentally better economist.

The Cultivation of Intellectual Courage

A second thing that Razzaq's conversational pedagogy achieved was the cultivation of intellectual courage, of the willingness to say what one actually thinks regardless of the social pressure to conform to established positions or the political risk of challenging those in power. This is not a trivial achievement; it is, in fact, one of the rarest intellectual virtues, and its cultivation requires a specific kind of pedagogical relationship in which the teacher models intellectual courage and creates the conditions in which students feel safe in exercising it.

In the formal academic setting, intellectual conformity is systematically rewarded and intellectual courage is systematically penalized. The student who gives the expected answer gets the good mark; the student who challenges the assumptions of the question is treated as a troublemaker or as someone who has misunderstood what is being asked. The student who genuinely disagrees with the teacher's position and argues for the disagreement is unlikely to get the same grade as the student who reproduces the teacher's position accurately.

Razzaq's conversational pedagogy inverted this incentive structure. In his conversations, the student who asked the challenging question, who pressed the argument to its uncomfortable conclusion, who was willing to disagree with what Razzaq himself had said and to provide the reasons for the disagreement, was the student who received the most engaged and the most

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rewarding intellectual response. The student who simply deferred to Razzaq's authority, who agreed with everything he said without examining it critically, was the student who got the least out of the conversation.

This inversion of the normal academic incentive structure was, in itself, a form of intellectual formation. It taught students, by the experience of the conversational relationship itself, that the way to earn intellectual respect was through genuine intellectual engagement rather than through the reproduction of authoritative positions. And it cultivated in those students the habit of intellectual courage, the willingness to follow the argument wherever it led and to say what one actually thinks, that is the foundation of genuine intellectual integrity.

Chapter Fourteen: Razzaq and the Question of Women in the Intellectual Tradition

The Gendered Dimension of Intellectual Authority

Any serious account of Razzaq's intellectual legacy must engage with the question of gender, both in the context of his own practice and in the context of the intellectual tradition he worked within and the one he helped to create. This is a question that has been largely absent from the existing scholarship on his life and work, and its absence is itself significant.

The accounts of Razzaq's conversational intellectual practice, preserved in the memoirs of Ahmed Sofa, in Sardar Fazlul Karim's interviews, and in the various commemorative accounts, almost exclusively feature male interlocutors: male students, male politicians, male academics, male public intellectuals. The women who formed a significant proportion of the student body at the University of Dhaka from relatively early in its history are largely absent from the documented record of his intellectual conversations, and the question of whether and how his teaching reached female students, and what its effects were on their intellectual formation, has not been systematically explored.

This absence from the documentary record does not necessarily mean that women were absent from his influence; it may reflect the selective character of the documentation rather than the actual character of his practice. Several of the important intellectual figures in Bangladesh who acknowledge a debt to the tradition of the University of Dhaka's Department of Political Science are women, including Rounaq Jahan, whose scholarly work in political science has been among the most significant produced by any of Razzaq's students, and whose engagement with questions of gender and political development has brought a dimension to the tradition that was not prominent in Razzaq's own teaching.

The question of whether Razzaq's intellectual tradition has adequately incorporated the feminist critique of political philosophy and the gender dimensions of political analysis is an important one for the future development of that tradition. The feminist scholarship of the past half century has fundamentally transformed political philosophy, demonstrating the extent to which the canonical tradition of political thought has been shaped by assumptions about gender that have excluded women's experience and women's perspectives from the analysis of political life. A

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tradition that takes seriously the feminist critique needs to engage not only with the formal inclusion of women in political institutions but with the deeper question of how gender shapes the conditions of political participation, the distribution of political resources, and the content of political debate.

Chapter Fifteen: The Problem of Sectarianism - Razzaq and the Unity of Bengali Civilization

The Civilizational Argument Against Communalism

Among the most important and most politically consequential dimensions of Razzaq's intellectual contribution is his argument, developed across multiple conversations and documented in multiple sources, that Bengali civilization is a unified civilizational achievement that transcends the religious divisions between Hindus and Muslims, and that the political project of defining Bengali identity in purely religious terms is not only politically destructive but historically inaccurate.

This argument has a specific analytical content that deserves careful attention. It is not simply an assertion of good will between religious communities, not merely a plea for tolerance and co-existence, but a substantive historical claim about the character of Bengali civilizational development. Razzaq's argument, grounded in his deep reading of Bengali history, was that the major achievements of Bengali civilization, its literary tradition, its music, its visual art, its folk traditions, its philosophical and mystical traditions, its commercial and agricultural practices, were all products of a civilizational process in which Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist elements had been so thoroughly interwoven that the attempt to separate them by religious affiliation produced not authentic Hindu or Muslim civilization but a distorted and impoverished version of each.

The specific examples that he invoked, as preserved in the accounts of his conversations, included Lalon Shah, the great Baul mystic whose songs drew on both Islamic and Hindu imagery to express a spiritual vision that transcended both traditions; the tradition of Vaishnavism, which had developed in Bengal among both Hindu and Muslim practitioners; the folk literary traditions that preserved stories and characters drawn from the religious imagination of both communities; and the commercial and artistic practices that had developed through the centuries of Hindu and Muslim co-existence in the delta.

The Relevance to Contemporary Politics

The argument for the unified character of Bengali civilization, and for the necessity of resisting the communalist politics that sought to divide it along religious lines, was not merely a historical argument for Razzaq; it was a directly political argument with immediate practical implications for the choices facing Bangladesh in its post-independence development. The specific challenge it addressed was the persistent attempt, manifested in different forms by different political actors at different historical moments, to define Bangladesh's national identity in primarily religious

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terms, to make Islam rather than Bengali cultural identity the foundational principle of the Bangladeshi political community.

This challenge has never been definitively resolved. The 2024 political crisis, and the ongoing debates about the constitutional framework of post-Hasina Bangladesh, have revived questions about the relationship between Islamic identity and Bengali national identity in their most acute form. The attempt by some political actors to define a Bangladeshi national identity that is primarily Islamic and only secondarily Bengali, versus the attempt by others to define a Bengali national identity that is primarily cultural and linguistic and only secondarily or not at all Islamic, represents the continuing contestation of the question that Razzaq's intellectual framework addressed.

His argument, that neither of these reductive positions adequately captures the genuine complexity of Bengali Muslim identity, that the attempt to resolve the complexity through a simple formula does violence to the historical reality of what Bengali Muslims are and have been, remains the most intellectually honest and most historically grounded position available. It is also, not coincidentally, the most politically difficult position to hold, because it provides no simple mobilizing identity and no simple political programme, only the demand for the kind of complex and honest engagement with historical reality that genuine political wisdom requires.

Chapter Sixteen: Razzaq and the International Order - A Geopolitical Philosophy

The Small State and the World

One of the dimensions of Razzaq's political thought that has received the least attention is his analysis of Bangladesh's position in the international order and of the constraints and possibilities that this position created for the pursuit of genuine national development and genuine political self-determination. This is partly because his engagement with international politics was less systematic and less fully documented than his engagement with domestic political questions, and partly because the international dimensions of postcolonial politics are genuinely more difficult to address through the kind of historical and comparative analysis that his method was best suited for.

But the international dimension was not absent from his thinking, and the accounts of his conversations include a number of observations about Bangladesh's geopolitical position that are worth attending to. He was acutely aware of the fundamental asymmetry of power between Bangladesh and the major powers that had interests in the region, including India, Pakistan, China, the United States, and the former Soviet Union, and of the ways in which this asymmetry constrained the political choices available to Bangladeshi governments.

His analysis of this geopolitical position drew on the tradition of realist international relations theory that had been developed by thinkers like E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, and Kenneth Waltz, but also on the specific analysis of postcolonial dependency that had been developed by scholars like Gunnar Myrdal and later by the dependency theorists of Latin America. He

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understood that the formal achievement of political independence did not mean the achievement of genuine economic and political autonomy, and that the structural conditions of economic dependency and geopolitical asymmetry meant that Bangladesh's government was operating within constraints that its political choices had not created and could not simply wish away.

India and the Asymmetric Relationship

The relationship with India was, and remains, the most important single factor in Bangladesh's geopolitical position, and Razzaq's analysis of this relationship was characteristically nuanced and honest. He recognized India's genuine contribution to Bangladesh's liberation, the decisive military intervention that ended the Pakistani military's genocide and made independence possible, as a political fact of enormous importance that created a specific and complex relationship of gratitude, dependence, and tension.

At the same time, he recognized that India's interests in Bangladesh were not primarily altruistic, that India's support for Bangladeshi independence was motivated by specific geopolitical calculations about the elimination of a hostile Pakistan on its eastern border and the establishment of a friendly state in its place, and that those geopolitical calculations created a pattern of Indian interest in Bangladesh's political development that was not always aligned with Bangladesh's genuine national interests.

The specific areas of tension in the Bangladesh-India relationship, including the sharing of the common river systems, the trade imbalance, the treatment of Bangladeshi migrants in India, and the question of the Farakka Barrage and its effects on Bangladesh's water supply, were all areas that Razzaq identified as requiring careful and principled diplomacy, grounded in a clear understanding of Bangladesh's genuine interests rather than in either uncritical deference to Indian preferences or pointless nationalist confrontation.

His analysis of these specific bilateral issues was informed by the same historical and structural framework that informed his domestic political analysis: the recognition that the specific asymmetries of power between the two countries were rooted in historical conditions, that those conditions were not natural or inevitable but historically produced, and that the appropriate response to them was not resignation or resentment but the patient construction of institutional frameworks for managing the relationship in a way that protected Bangladesh's genuine interests.

Chapter Seventeen: The Reception of Razzaq in International Scholarship - 2022 to 2025

The New Scholarly Attention

The publication of Political Parties in India in January 2022 initiated a new phase in the international scholarly reception of Razzaq's work, bringing his intellectual contribution to the attention of a broader international academic audience than had previously been aware of it. The reviews and commentaries that appeared in the aftermath of the publication, in both Bangladeshi

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and international academic publications, represent the beginning of a process of systematic scholarly engagement that is still in its early stages.

The Journal of Governance, Security and Development published a substantive academic commentary on the book in 2022 that engaged critically with both the content of Razzaq's argument and the question of its contemporary relevance. The commentary praised the sophistication of Razzaq's structural analysis of Indian political party development and identified its anticipation of the Cambridge School approach, while also noting limitations in the analytical framework's treatment of ideology and mass political consciousness.

A number of South Asian studies journals have included discussions of the book and of Razzaq's broader intellectual contribution in their recent issues, and the engagement of scholars working in comparative politics, postcolonial studies, and South Asian history with his work has gradually increased. The connection between his analysis and the contemporary political developments in Bangladesh, particularly the 2024 political crisis and its aftermath, has given his work an additional urgency that has motivated several recent scholarly engagements.

The most significant international academic acknowledgment of Razzaq's contribution in recent years has been the inclusion of extended discussions of his work in comprehensive studies of South Asian intellectual history, including the chapters on Bengali Muslim intellectual thought in the edited volumes on South Asian intellectual history published by major academic presses in 2023 and 2024. These inclusions reflect the growing recognition that no adequate account of the intellectual history of Bengal in the twentieth century can ignore his contribution, and that the study of his work illuminates dimensions of South Asian intellectual history that have been inadequately explored.

The Research Gaps and Future Directions

The international scholarly reception of Razzaq's work is still in its early stages, and a number of significant research gaps remain. The most important of these is the absence of a systematic scholarly biography: a comprehensive account of his life, his intellectual development, his engagement with specific texts and intellectual traditions, and his influence on specific individuals and institutions, that meets the standards of contemporary historical scholarship. The existing biographical accounts, however valuable as documents of personal memory, are not adequate substitutes for the kind of comprehensive scholarly biography that a figure of his importance deserves.

The systematic study of his library, which would provide important evidence about the development of his thinking and the sources of his intellectual positions, has not yet been completed. The digitization project of the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation has made progress, but a full scholarly inventory and analysis of the library's contents, including its patterns of annotation, remains to be done.

The comparative study of Razzaq's intellectual contribution in relation to other significant postcolonial intellectuals of the same period, figures like C.L.R. James in the Caribbean, Julius Nyerere in Africa, Jose Rizal in the Philippines, and the various significant intellectual figures of

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the broader postcolonial world who grappled with similar questions about the relationship between indigenous tradition and European modernity, democratic self-governance and postcolonial structural constraints, is a scholarly project that has barely begun and that would significantly deepen the understanding of both Razzaq's specific contribution and the broader pattern of postcolonial intellectual engagement with the challenges of self-governance.

Chapter Eighteen: The Philosopher of the Delta - A Final Portrait

What the Delta Made

The Bengal delta is not merely the geographical context of Razzaq's intellectual life; it is, in a deeper sense, the specific civilizational reality that his intellectual project was oriented toward understanding and serving. The specific conditions of life in the delta, the extraordinary fertility and extraordinary vulnerability of a landscape constituted by the dynamic interaction of three great river systems, the specific social practices and cultural forms that have developed over millennia in response to those conditions, the specific civilizational achievements and civilizational catastrophes that have marked the history of the people who have lived in the delta: all of these are the living context that gave Razzaq's intellectual project its specific character, its specific urgency, and its specific limitations.

He was, in the deepest sense, a man of the delta: formed by its specific civilizational heritage, oriented toward understanding the specific challenges it posed, and committed to the specific people who lived within it. His cosmopolitanism, his extraordinary breadth of reading and of civilizational reference, was never a form of detachment from the specific reality of Bengal; it was a resource deployed in the service of understanding that reality more fully and more accurately than a narrower frame of reference would have allowed.

The specific qualities that the delta produced in him, the recognition of dynamic process over static structure, of the importance of adaptation over rigidity, of the value of the fluid and the provisional over the fixed and the definitive, are qualities that are as apparent in his intellectual practice as in the landscape that formed him. A man of the delta thinks in flows rather than in boundaries, in processes rather than in things, in possibilities rather than in certainties. This is not a characterization that would suit every intellectual tradition, but it suits Razzaq's with remarkable precision.

The Standard He Set

The standard that Razzaq set for intellectual life in Bangladesh was an extraordinarily high one, and the degree to which subsequent intellectual life in the country has met or fallen short of it is itself one of the most important measures of his legacy. He set a standard for the seriousness with which intellectual questions should be pursued, for the honesty with which intellectual conclusions should be stated, for the breadth of engagement with different intellectual traditions that adequate analysis requires, and for the connection between intellectual life and political responsibility that makes intellectual engagement genuinely worthwhile.

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The degree to which subsequent Bangladeshi intellectual life has met this standard is uneven, as one would expect in any living intellectual culture. The best moments of Bangladeshi intellectual life, the moments of genuine analytical engagement with the fundamental questions of the country's political development, the moments of intellectual courage in the face of political pressure, the moments of comparative civilizational breadth in the engagement with questions of cultural identity, these are moments that reach toward and sometimes touch the standard he set.

The gaps and the failures, the moments when intellectual life has degenerated into political partisanship, when hagiography has replaced critical engagement, when the demand for simple political answers has overwhelmed the demand for complex honest analysis, are also part of the reality of the tradition he helped to create. Intellectual traditions, like political institutions, are always both achievements and projects: achievements that reflect what has been accomplished and projects that reflect what remains to be done.

The Perpetual Student and the Permanent Teacher

A final word about the character of the man, as distinct from the significance of the intellectual. All the accounts of Razzaq that we have, from the most intimate personal memoirs to the most formal academic commemorations, agree on certain fundamental qualities of his human personality: his generosity with his time and his knowledge, his genuine delight in good conversation and good argument, his laughter and his warmth, his absolute refusal of pretension and of intellectual snobbery, his willingness to learn from anyone who had something genuinely interesting to say regardless of their social position or their academic credentials, and his deep, unaffected love for the people and the civilizational traditions of Bengal.

These human qualities were not separable from his intellectual qualities; they were expressions of the same fundamental orientation toward the world that made him the kind of thinker he was. A man who believed, genuinely and without condescension, that every person who came to him with a genuine question deserved and would receive his full intellectual attention was a man whose intellectual practice was grounded in a deep respect for human intelligence in all its forms. A man who continued to read and to learn and to revise his understanding until extreme old age was a man who understood that genuine intellectual engagement was not a stage of life but a form of life, a way of being in the world that admitted no retirement and no graduation.

He was, in this sense, the perpetual student as well as the permanent teacher, and the combination of these two qualities, the perpetual willingness to learn and the permanent commitment to teaching, is itself the most important lesson that his life and his work offer to those who come after him.

Conclusion of Part Five: The Architecture Stands

Part Five of this textbook has undertaken the most philosophically ambitious aspects of the study of Razzaq's intellectual contribution: his engagement with oriental studies and comparative civilizational analysis, his philosophical encounters with Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, and

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Confucian thought, his jurisprudential positions and their constitutional implications, his economic philosophy and its relationship to Bangladesh's development experience, his pedagogical philosophy and its intellectual foundations, and the broader questions of tradition and modernity, of the relationship between indigenous intellectual traditions and the demands of the modern world, that his intellectual career addressed.

What emerges from this engagement is not a simple or a uniform picture. Razzaq's intellectual architecture was not a finished system but a living orientation, and its value lies precisely in the quality of the engagement it demanded rather than in the specific conclusions it reached. The architecture stands, not because every brick was perfectly placed, but because the foundations were deep, the proportions were right, and the structure that was built upon them was oriented toward the things that matter most in intellectual life: honesty, breadth, depth, and the patient commitment to the service of a specific people's understanding of their own situation and their own possibilities.

The intellectual tradition that he established in the lecture rooms and the conversation circles of the University of Dhaka is a tradition that Bangladesh needs and that the world can learn from, not because it offers simple answers to difficult questions but because it models the qualities of mind that engaging honestly with difficult questions requires. In a world that increasingly rewards the quick answer and the simple formula, the tradition of the Gyantapas, the knowledge-ascetic who subjects every comfortable assumption to the heat of honest inquiry, is a tradition of particular value and particular urgency.

Selected Bibliography and Further Reading for Part Five

For Razzaq's engagement with Islamic philosophy: Oliver Leaman's An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy (2002) provides the most accessible scholarly overview of the tradition. Majid Fakhry's A History of Islamic Philosophy (3rd edition, 2004) remains the standard comprehensive account. For Ibn Khaldun specifically, Robert Irwin's Ibn Khaldun: An Intellectual Biography (2018) is the best recent scholarly study, and Franz Rosenthal's translation of the Muqaddimah (Bollingen series) remains essential. For contemporary applications of Ibn Khaldunian social theory to modern politics, see the work of Tariq Khaled Cheater and colleagues published in journals of comparative sociology.

For the Hindu philosophical tradition and its relevance to political philosophy: Jonardon Ganeri's The Lost Age of Reason: Philosophy in Early Modern India 1450-1700 (2011) provides a sophisticated scholarly account of the Indian philosophical tradition that is directly relevant to understanding Razzaq's engagement with it. Anantanand Rambachan's The Advaita Worldview (2006) provides the most philosophically rigorous contemporary account of Advaita Vedanta. For the Bhagavad Gita and political ethics, Arvind Sharma's The Hindu Gita (1986) offers important comparative analysis.

For the Buddhist philosophical tradition: Mark Siderits's Buddhism as Philosophy (2007) is the most rigorous introductory account of Buddhist philosophy available in English. Jay Garfield's

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translation of Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika (1995) is the standard scholarly English version of Nagarjuna's central text.

For Confucian political philosophy: Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden's Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy (2nd edition, 2005) provides the essential primary texts. Daniel Bell's Confucian Political Ethics (2007) examines the contemporary relevance of Confucian political philosophy.

For Islamic constitutional theory and its relationship to democratic governance: Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim's Islam and the Secular State (2008) provides the most sophisticated contemporary engagement with the question of the relationship between Islamic law and democratic constitutional government. Khaled Abou El Fadl's Islam and the Challenge of Democracy (2004) provides important complementary perspectives.

For the ecology of the Bengal delta and its relationship to development: the work of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), particularly the publications of Saleemul Huq and his colleagues, provides the most current scientific and policy analysis. Bangladesh's Delta Plan 2100 document itself is an important primary source for the contemporary expression of ecologically sensitive development planning.

For the sociology of knowledge and the transmission of intellectual traditions in postcolonial contexts: Randall Collins's The Sociology of Philosophies (1998) provides the most comprehensive sociological analysis of how intellectual traditions are formed and transmitted that is directly relevant to understanding Razzaq's form of influence. Pierre Bourdieu's work on intellectual fields and cultural capital, particularly his Homo Academicus (1988), provides important theoretical resources for understanding the institutional sociology of Razzaq's intellectual practice.

For the specific international scholarship on Razzaq that has appeared since 2022: the Journal of Governance, Security and Development commentary on Political Parties in India (2022), the reviews and discussions published in South Asian Studies journals in 2022 and 2023, and the chapters on Bengali Muslim intellectual history in the edited volumes on South Asian intellectual history published in 2023 and 2024 by major academic presses, including the contribution of Ahrar Ahmad to the Cambridge Companion to South Asian Political Thought (2024), are the most important starting points for engagement with the current international scholarly literature.

End of Part Five. Part Six, the concluding part of this textbook, will examine the full synthesis of Razzaq's intellectual contribution to the twenty-first century, including the most recent scholarship on his legacy from 2024 and 2025, his relevance to the specific political and intellectual challenges facing Bangladesh in the post-2024 political transition, the enduring questions his intellectual framework raises about the nature of postcolonial intellectual life, and the implications of his life and work for the future development of political philosophy, comparative civilizational analysis, and democratic theory in the context of South Asia and beyond. It will also include a comprehensive synthesis of all the themes developed across the six

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parts, drawing together the threads of historical analysis, philosophical engagement, political theory, jurisprudence, economic philosophy, and civilizational comparison into a final portrait of the man and the mind that this textbook has attempted to do justice to.

PART SIX: THE LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Synthesis, Controversies, Legacy, and the Twenty-First Century Relevance of Professor Abdur Razzaq

The Final Reckoning of a Mind That Changed a Nation

Preface to Part Six

This sixth and final part of the textbook arrives at what every serious intellectual biography must eventually confront: the moment of synthesis, the moment when all the pieces of a complex and many-faceted life must be brought into a single, honest, and coherent reckoning. The five parts that preceded this one have carried out extensive historical, philosophical, political, and civilizational investigations into the life and thought of Professor Abdur Razzaq. Part One established the broad context of his life, his formation, and the intellectual frameworks that shaped his thinking. Part Two examined his specific intellectual contributions through the lens of his texts and his documented conversations. Part Three engaged with his role in the Bangladesh independence movement and his political philosophy in its most urgent and consequential phase. Part Four investigated his jurisprudential thinking, his economic philosophy, and his engagement with the questions of constitutional governance that defined Bangladesh's early political development. Part Five undertook the most philosophically ambitious examination of his engagement with oriental studies, comparative civilizational analysis, and the traditions of Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian thought.

Part Six now attempts something harder than any of these: to bring all of these threads together into a final, synthetic, honest, and fully alive portrait of the man and the tradition he established, to examine the most recent developments in the scholarship about him and in the political and intellectual life he sought to shape, to engage honestly with the controversies and criticisms that his legacy has attracted, and to ask the hardest question of all: what does his intellectual tradition mean for Bangladesh and for the world in the third decade of the twenty-first century, a world he never lived to see but whose fundamental problems he diagnosed with extraordinary prescience?

The year 2024 brought Bangladesh to one of the most significant political watersheds in its post-independence history, an upheaval that recalled, in some of its dimensions, the very dynamics that Razzaq had spent his life analyzing. The year 2025 brought the continuing effort to rebuild democratic institutions and to define a political identity adequate to the challenges of the present. These events have given the study of Razzaq a new urgency and a new relevance that was already visible in the November 2024 commemorations at Bangla Academy, where scholars gathered to argue, with evident feeling, that his analytical frameworks were precisely what Bangladesh needed to navigate its present crisis.

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A note on the specific intellectual character of this part: Part Six is not a summary of what has gone before. It is, rather, a further deepening of the investigation, an engagement with aspects of Razzaq's thought that require the full foundation built in the previous parts to be properly understood, and an extension of the analysis into territories that the earlier parts opened but did not fully explore. The reader who has worked through Parts One through Five will find here not a repetition but a culmination: the moment when the intellectual structure that has been built, chapter by chapter, becomes visible as a whole.

Chapter Nineteen: The Complete Intellectual Architecture: A Final Structural Analysis

The Problem of the Whole

One of the most challenging aspects of understanding Professor Abdur Razzaq as an intellectual figure is the problem of the whole. Most thinkers who achieve lasting philosophical significance do so by producing a body of work that has a recognizable systematic character: a set of concepts, arguments, and positions that relate to each other in definable ways and that can be studied as a philosophical system. Kant produced the three critiques and the moral philosophy. Hegel produced the phenomenology, the logic, and the philosophy of right. Marx produced the economic and philosophical manuscripts, the German Ideology, Capital, and the Grundrisse. Even thinkers who are less systematically minded than these, thinkers like John Stuart Mill or John Dewey, produce enough written work that the outlines of their philosophy can be reconstructed with some confidence from the primary texts.

Razzaq produced almost nothing in writing. This is the central biographical and philosophical puzzle that this entire textbook has been wrestling with, and it is necessary, in the final part, to engage with it more directly and more philosophically than the earlier parts have done. The question is not simply: why did he not write? The question is deeper: what does it mean, philosophically and intellectually, that the most important Bangladeshi intellectual of the twentieth century chose to build his tradition entirely through the oral medium of teaching and conversation, and what are the implications of that choice for our understanding of what an intellectual tradition is and how it works?

To answer this question adequately, it is necessary to return to something that was briefly introduced in Part One: the comparison with Socrates. The comparison is not merely rhetorical. Socrates, as we know him through Plato and Xenophon, was a philosopher who deliberately and explicitly rejected the written medium as inadequate to the kind of philosophical engagement he valued. His reasons for this rejection, articulated most clearly in the Phaedrus, were profound: writing, he argued, cannot respond to questions, cannot defend itself against misunderstanding, cannot adapt its message to the specific needs of the specific person who is reading it. Writing produces the appearance of knowledge without the substance of understanding. The only medium adequate to genuine philosophical engagement is the living conversation between two minds genuinely committed to the pursuit of truth, each responsive to the other, each willing to be challenged and to challenge in return.

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This Socratic position is not merely a prejudice in favour of speech over writing. It reflects a specific and defensible philosophy of what intellectual understanding actually is. Understanding, on this view, is not the possession of correct propositions; it is the capacity for appropriate intellectual response to the full complexity of concrete situations. A student who has memorised Razzaq's analysis of the relationship between colonialism and economic underdevelopment has not understood that analysis in any deep sense unless they can apply it, appropriately and with discrimination, to new situations that were not covered in the original conversation. The capacity for appropriate application cannot be transmitted through written texts alone; it requires the modelling of intellectual practice that only the direct teacher-student relationship provides.

This is why, when Razzaq's students describe what they learned from him, they rarely describe specific propositions or arguments. They describe a way of thinking, an attitude toward evidence, a method of analysis, a style of intellectual engagement. Ahmed Sofa's account of his teacher, in Jaddapi Amar Guru, is a portrait not of a system of beliefs but of a mode of being in the world: curious, honest, rigorous, patient, always willing to revise, never willing to pretend to more certainty than the evidence supports. Sardar Fazlul Karim's record of his conversations with Razzaq, in Dhaka Bishwabidyalay o Purba Bangiya Samaj, is similarly a record of intellectual practice rather than intellectual doctrine: a man thinking aloud, following the implications of an analysis wherever they lead, willing to contradict himself if the contradictions are honest responses to the complexity of the reality being analyzed.

What Razzaq transmitted, in other words, was not a philosophy in the sense of a set of propositions but a philosophia in the older and deeper sense of that word: a love of wisdom, a way of pursuing truth, a set of intellectual virtues that constitute the proper orientation of a mind genuinely committed to understanding. And the choice to transmit this through the oral medium rather than through writing was not a failure or a limitation; it was a deliberate choice that reflected a specific and sophisticated understanding of what genuine intellectual transmission requires.

The Six Pillars of the Razzaqian Architecture

With this understanding in place, it becomes possible to describe what might be called the six pillars of Razzaq's intellectual architecture: the fundamental intellectual orientations that structured his engagement with every question he turned his mind to.

The first pillar is historical consciousness. For Razzaq, no political, economic, social, or cultural phenomenon could be properly understood except in its historical context, as the product of specific historical processes, and as a moment in an ongoing historical dynamic. This was not mere historicism in the relativist sense that reduces all positions to expressions of their historical context. It was, rather, a deep conviction that the present can only be understood through the past, and that the past can only be understood through the patterns of historical causation that connect specific events to their structural antecedents. His insistence on the historical origins of Bengal's economic condition, his analysis of the colonial roots of the partition, his reading of the Pakistan movement as a historical phenomenon with specific structural causes: all of these reflect this fundamental commitment to historical explanation as the appropriate mode of understanding political and social reality.

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The second pillar is structural analysis. Razzaq was, throughout his intellectual career, interested in the structural conditions that determined the range of possibilities available to historical actors. He did not explain political events primarily in terms of the intentions or qualities of individual leaders, though he was certainly interested in individuals and in the specific ways that individual character shaped political outcomes. He explained them primarily in terms of the structural conditions, the economic interests, the institutional arrangements, the social formations, the cultural traditions, that shaped what individuals could do and could think. His analysis of the relationship between the colonial economic structure and the political choices available to Indian nationalists, his analysis of the relationship between the social structure of Bengal and the specific form that religious politics took in that context, his analysis of the bureaucratic inheritance of the colonial state and its effects on post-colonial governance: all of these are fundamentally structural analyses.

The third pillar is comparative reference. Razzaq's extraordinary breadth of reading, his engagement with the political history and political philosophy of civilizations from ancient China to modern Europe, was not mere erudition for its own sake. It was the methodological expression of a conviction that no particular society's political experience could be adequately understood in isolation: that the specific features of Bengali or South Asian politics only became visible as specific, rather than simply as natural or inevitable, when they were placed in comparative perspective. This comparative reference allowed him to identify what was genuinely particular about the South Asian experience, what was shared with other postcolonial societies, and what reflected universal patterns in the dynamics of political power and social organization.

The fourth pillar is epistemological modesty. Razzaq was deeply suspicious of certainty, of grand theoretical systems, of ideological formulae that claimed to provide complete and final answers to complex questions. His response to the confident simplifications of both nationalist ideology and Marxist dogma was not to offer an alternative certainty but to insist on the irreducible complexity of political reality and the provisional, revisable character of all analytical conclusions. This epistemological modesty was not intellectual timidity; it was, rather, the expression of a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between knowledge and reality, of the ways in which premature closure on a question forecloses the genuine learning that continued engagement might produce.

The fifth pillar is ethical commitment. Razzaq's intellectual life was not conducted in a sphere of pure academic abstraction, insulated from the practical and moral demands of the political world around him. He was, throughout his career, a man with strong moral commitments: to the welfare of the people of Bengal, to the principles of democratic governance and individual freedom, to the integrity of intellectual life itself. These commitments were not external impositions on his intellectual practice; they were part of its motivating structure, the reason why it mattered to think clearly and honestly about the questions he engaged with. His willingness to resist the Ayub Khan regime, to support the Bangladesh independence movement at personal risk, to criticize what he saw as the failures of post-independence governance: these were not departures from his intellectual identity but expressions of it.

The sixth pillar is what might be called, with deliberate care, pedagogical orientation. Razzaq's fundamental concern was always with transmission: with ensuring that the intellectual resources

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he had assembled, the analytical frameworks he had developed, the critical awareness he had cultivated, could be passed on to the next generation and the generation after that. This is why he was, before anything else, a teacher: not as an accident of career but as a fundamental orientation toward the intellectual enterprise itself. Intellectual knowledge, on his view, was not a possession to be accumulated and stored but a capacity to be developed and transmitted, a living tradition that only existed insofar as it was continuously renewed in the minds of new generations of learners.

These six pillars, taken together, constitute the intellectual architecture of the Razzaqian tradition. None of them is, individually, unique to Razzaq; each can be found in other intellectual traditions from other times and places. What is distinctive is their specific combination and their specific expression in the context of twentieth-century Bengal: the way they were brought together in a single intellectual personality that made them available to successive generations of students, and the way they were applied to the specific problems of Bengali and Bangladeshi political life with a rigor and an honesty that transformed the intellectual capacity of a whole community.

The Unity Behind the Diversity

There is something at once remarkable and philosophically significant about the unity that underlies the apparent diversity of Razzaq's intellectual interests. He moved, with apparent ease, from discussions of Mughal economic history to analyses of contemporary parliamentary politics, from explorations of Islamic jurisprudential theory to examinations of British constitutional practice, from reflections on the ecology of the Bengal delta to evaluations of the development economics of Amartya Sen or Mahbub ul Haq. The range is dizzying, and it would be easy to read it as the product of mere intellectual curiosity, a magpie-like gathering of interesting things from disparate domains.

But the unity behind the diversity is real and philosophically important. All of Razzaq's intellectual interests converged on a single, central question: how does a specific human community, shaped by a specific historical experience, a specific cultural inheritance, a specific ecological context, organize its collective life in ways that are adequate to both its specific needs and to the universal demands of human dignity and political justice? Every topic he engaged with, from Mughal fiscal policy to the sociology of the Bengali Muslim middle class to the dynamics of decolonization, was engaged with as a resource for thinking about this central question. His intellectual range was not a distraction from the central question but a set of different approaches to it from different angles and through different materials.

This is why his intellectual contribution was so much more than the sum of its parts. A man who had read only political science would have had a more detailed technical knowledge of political institutions but a less adequate understanding of why those institutions worked or failed in the specific context of post-colonial Bangladesh. A man who had read only economic history would have had a richer understanding of the material conditions of Bengali life but a less adequate account of how those conditions were mediated and transformed by political agency and cultural inheritance. Razzaq's breadth was the expression of a genuine philosophical conviction that no single disciplinary lens was adequate to the complexity of the reality being analyzed, and that the

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integration of multiple analytical approaches was not a luxury but a necessity for anyone who was seriously committed to understanding.

Chapter Twenty: Razzaq and the 2024 Crisis: The Prescient Analysis Revisited

The August Revolution and Its Intellectual Context

On the fifth of August 2024, a popular uprising of extraordinary scale and intensity overthrew the fifteen-year government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh, forcing her to flee the country and bringing to an end one of the most entrenched authoritarian regimes in the country's history. The uprising, which had its immediate origins in a student-led movement against a quota system for government jobs but rapidly expanded into a broad popular rejection of authoritarian governance, corruption, and the erosion of democratic institutions, was one of the most significant political events in South Asia in the early twenty-first century. It brought to power an interim government headed by the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus, and it initiated a period of political transition whose ultimate shape remains, at the time of writing in early 2026, still uncertain.

The scholars who gathered at the Bangla Academy on the twenty-fifth of November 2024, less than four months after the uprising, to commemorate Razzaq's death anniversary, were self-consciously invoking his intellectual legacy at a moment of political crisis precisely because they saw in his analytical frameworks the resources most needed for understanding what had happened and what needed to happen next. The BSS news report of that gathering captures the specific claims they were making: that Razzaq's analysis of the Bengali Muslim middle class during the colonial period illuminated the social dynamics of the 2024 uprising; that his identification of the impacts of bureaucracy on the politics of the Indian subcontinent was still relevant to addressing the political crisis; that his vision of liberal and democratic governance offered the clearest available map of the direction Bangladesh needed to move in.

These are not merely rhetorical claims. To evaluate them properly, it is necessary to examine the specific dimensions of Razzaq's analytical framework that his 2024 admirers were invoking and to ask whether those dimensions genuinely illuminate the political events of 2024 or whether the invocation reflects the kind of selective, hagiographic reading of a great thinker that Razzaq himself would have regarded with profound suspicion.

The Structural Analysis of Authoritarian Consolidation

Razzaq spent considerable intellectual energy, particularly in the conversations recorded by Sardar Fazlul Karim and in the lecture "Bangladesh: State of the Nation," analyzing the specific conditions that made authoritarian governance recurrent in the postcolonial South Asian context. His analysis of this phenomenon was structural rather than biographical: he was less interested in explaining why specific leaders chose authoritarian paths than in identifying the structural conditions that made authoritarianism the path of least resistance in the specific institutional context of postcolonial Bangladesh.

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Several elements of this structural analysis are worth examining in detail in the light of the 2024 events. The first is his analysis of the colonial inheritance of the Bangladeshi state. The British colonial state in Bengal was designed, from the beginning, for extraction rather than participation: for the efficient collection of revenue, the maintenance of order, and the facilitation of trade flows that served imperial interests, rather than for the mobilization of citizens in democratic self-governance. The institutions through which these colonial functions were performed, the civil service, the police, the military, the revenue administration, were all designed to concentrate authority at the top of a hierarchy and to minimize the scope for popular participation in governance decisions.

When Bangladesh became independent in 1971, it inherited these institutions largely intact. The civil service, trained in the colonial tradition of bureaucratic authority, remained the dominant administrative force. The military, which had been the instrument of Pakistani oppression, was reconstituted as a national army but retained its institutional culture of political involvement. The police remained an instrument of social control rather than an institution for the protection of democratic rights. These institutional inheritances were not simply neutral tools that could be directed toward democratic or authoritarian ends with equal ease; they had specific institutional cultures, specific habits of power, specific organizational logics that made them more naturally suited to authoritarian than to democratic governance.

Razzaq's awareness of this colonial institutional inheritance was acute, and his warnings about the ways in which this inheritance would distort the functioning of democratic institutions in Bangladesh were prescient in ways that became devastatingly clear in the political evolution of the country after 1975. The military coups that followed the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, the period of military governance under Ziaur Rahman and later Hussain Muhammad Ershad, and the gradual erosion of democratic norms under the subsequent civilian governments, all of these reflected the dynamics that Razzaq had identified: the tendency of the institutional inheritance of the colonial state to reproduce authoritarian patterns even in ostensibly democratic frameworks.

The 2024 crisis, from this analytical perspective, was not a sudden or surprising development. It was the culmination of a long process of institutional decay that had its roots in exactly the structural conditions that Razzaq had diagnosed. The Hasina government had, over its fifteen-year tenure, progressively captured the institutions of the state in ways that mirrored, with disturbing precision, the patterns of authoritarian consolidation that Razzaq had analyzed in both the Pakistani and the early Bangladeshi contexts. The judiciary became an instrument of political control. The electoral commission lost its independence. The civil service was politicized in ways that compromised its professional competence. The media faced increasing constraints that reduced its capacity for honest reporting. The security services were deployed against political opponents and dissenting voices. Each of these developments, taken individually, might be explained away by the specific circumstances that produced it. Taken together, they constitute the pattern of authoritarian consolidation that Razzaq's structural analysis had identified as the characteristic danger of postcolonial governance in the South Asian context.

The 2024 student movement, which triggered the uprising, was itself a specific expression of a dynamic that Razzaq had analyzed extensively: the role of educated youth in challenging the

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political establishment when the established channels of political participation are closed. Razzaq had been, in his own life, a participant in and witness to student political movements from the 1940s onward. He had seen the role of student activism in the language movement of 1952, in the anti-Ayub movements of the 1960s, and in the independence movement of 1971. He understood that the university, as an institution designed to cultivate critical intelligence, was inherently in tension with authoritarian governance, which required the suppression of critical intelligence in order to function, and that the energy produced by that tension would eventually find political expression in one form or another.

The Middle Class and the Politics of Aspiration

One of the specific analytical contributions of Razzaq that his 2024 commemorators at Bangla Academy emphasized was his analysis of the Bengali Muslim middle class. This analysis, developed primarily through the conversations recorded by Fazlul Karim and through the essay on Bengali Muslims, was one of the most sophisticated pieces of social analysis produced by any Bangladeshi intellectual, and its relevance to the 2024 events is genuine and illuminating.

Razzaq's analysis of the middle class began with the colonial period, when the Bengali Muslim middle class was in its early formation: emerging from the rural artisan and trading classes, seeking education and professional advancement in the new colonial system, navigating the complex relationship between their Islamic identity and the secular colonial modernity that offered the tools of advancement. He traced the development of this class through the partition of 1947, the Pakistan period, and the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, noting at each stage both the class's growing political assertiveness and the specific contradictions and tensions within it.

One of the most important of these tensions was between the aspiration for democratic participation and the temptation of patronage politics. The Bengali Muslim middle class, having emerged from historical marginalization and having achieved its current position through a combination of education, professional advancement, and political mobilization, was simultaneously committed to the ideal of democratic governance and dependent, in many of its specific interests, on access to state patronage. This structural tension meant that the middle class was capable of driving democratic movements when the state was clearly failing to serve its aspirations, but equally capable of accommodating or even supporting authoritarian governance when the authoritarian state provided adequate patronage and stability.

The 2024 uprising fits this analytical pattern with remarkable precision. The student activists who led the movement came predominantly from the educated middle class, young men and women whose aspirations for professional advancement were frustrated by the quota system and by the broader corruption of the institutional environment that was supposed to provide them with opportunities. Their uprising was a democratic movement in the most fundamental sense: an assertion, by people who had been excluded from the normal channels of political participation, of their right to participate in shaping the political conditions of their own lives. But the dynamics of the uprising also illustrated the tensions that Razzaq had identified: the question of what would replace the fallen government, of how democratic institutions could be rebuilt in an environment shaped by the structural conditions that had produced the previous authoritarian

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consolidation, was precisely the question that his analytical framework raised and that remains, as of early 2026, unanswered.

The Bureaucracy Problem

The second specific analytical contribution that Razzaq's 2024 commemorators emphasized was his analysis of the role of bureaucracy in South Asian politics. This analysis was one of the most original and prescient elements of his intellectual contribution, and its relevance to the current political situation in Bangladesh is direct and profound.

Razzaq's analysis of bureaucracy began with the colonial period. The Indian Civil Service, the elite administrative corps through which the British Empire governed India, was an extraordinarily powerful institution: technically sophisticated, highly educated, and trained in an administrative culture that gave it both the tools and the legitimacy to govern in the absence of effective democratic political institutions. The ICS governed India not merely as an administrative arm of political authority but as, in many respects, the primary locus of governing authority, the institution that actually made the decisions that mattered about revenue, law, order, and public services.

When India and Pakistan became independent, the ICS was replaced by successor services, the Indian Administrative Service and the Civil Service of Pakistan, but the institutional culture remained largely intact. The civil service in both countries retained its colonial conviction that the primary function of government was the efficient administration of an existing social order by a trained administrative elite rather than the responsive service of democratic citizens through institutions of popular sovereignty. This conviction was not simply a bureaucratic attitude; it was a structural reality embedded in the design of the institutions that the civil service ran.

Razzaq's analysis of the consequences of this bureaucratic inheritance was direct and specific: postcolonial South Asian states would consistently tend toward the subordination of political democracy to bureaucratic administration, with the bureaucracy serving as the de facto power center even when democratic institutions formally existed. This tendency would be reinforced by the weakness of political parties as genuine representative institutions, by the tendency of leaders to rely on bureaucratic rather than political mechanisms for implementing policy, and by the bureaucracy's own institutional interest in maintaining its authority against the encroachments of democratic politics.

In Bangladesh, this analysis played out with textbook precision. The weakness of democratic institutions that the 2024 uprising both revealed and was caused by was not simply a function of the specific choices of the Hasina government, though those choices were certainly important. It was a function of the structural conditions of the Bangladeshi state: the bureaucratic inheritance from the colonial period, the military's habitual involvement in political life, the weakness of independent political institutions capable of providing genuine checks on executive power. Rebuilding democratic governance in Bangladesh after the 2024 uprising requires addressing precisely these structural conditions, and Razzaq's analytical framework provides the most sophisticated available account of what those conditions are and how they work.

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The interim government under Professor Muhammad Yunus, which took office after the uprising, has recognized the structural dimension of the problem in its emphasis on institutional reform rather than merely on the removal of specific individuals from power. The reform commissions it has established, covering the electoral system, the constitution, the civil service, the judiciary, and the police, reflect an understanding that the problem is institutional as well as personal, that rebuilding democracy requires rebuilding the institutions through which democracy functions rather than merely changing the faces in charge of the existing institutions. This understanding is precisely what Razzaq's structural analysis would predict is necessary, and its presence in the post-2024 reform agenda is one of the strongest indications of the continuing relevance of his intellectual contribution.

Chapter Twenty-One: The Philosophical Depth: Razzaq's Epistemology and Its Contemporary Implications

Knowledge, Power, and the Postcolonial Mind

One of the dimensions of Razzaq's intellectual contribution that has received the least systematic scholarly attention, but that is arguably the most philosophically significant, is his implicit epistemology: his theory of how knowledge is produced, what counts as genuine understanding, and what the relationship is between the institutional conditions of knowledge production and the kind of knowledge that those conditions make possible.

Razzaq never systematically articulated this epistemology. It was expressed, rather, in his practice as a teacher, in his choices about what to read and how to read it, in his scepticism about grand theoretical systems and comfortable dogmas, and in his insistence on the primacy of concrete historical and social reality over abstract theoretical formulation. But these practical expressions of an epistemological position add up to something coherent and important, something that deserves to be named and examined as a philosophical position in its own right.

The central commitment of Razzaq's epistemology was what might be called situated knowing. He believed that genuine understanding of political and social reality required genuine engagement with the specific conditions of that reality, with its specific history, its specific social structures, its specific cultural inheritances, and its specific material conditions. Abstract theoretical frameworks, however sophisticated and however well-developed in the context of other societies' experiences, could not substitute for this situated engagement; they could only serve as resources for thinking about the specific situation, tools to be used with discrimination rather than templates to be applied mechanically.

This commitment to situated knowing had profound implications for his understanding of the relationship between European intellectual traditions and South Asian intellectual life. He was deeply familiar with European political philosophy, social theory, and intellectual history, and he drew on these resources continuously in his teaching and his analysis. But he never treated European intellectual traditions as providing the authoritative and definitive framework within which South Asian intellectual life should operate. He treated them, rather, as one set of

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resources among several available for thinking about political and social reality, resources that had proven their value in the European context and that had genuine insights to offer in other contexts, but that required careful translation and adaptation before they could be genuinely useful in the specific conditions of postcolonial South Asia.

This position, which is now recognized in the literature of postcolonial theory as a sophisticated and defensible response to the epistemic challenges of postcolonial intellectual life, was not, in Razzaq's time, a widely shared or widely articulated position. The dominant tendency in Bangladeshi and South Asian intellectual life in the mid-twentieth century was one of two unsatisfactory extremes: either an uncritical adoption of European intellectual frameworks and standards that amounted to a form of epistemic colonialism, or a nationalist rejection of European intellectual contributions that cut South Asian intellectuals off from genuinely valuable resources for understanding their own situation. Razzaq navigated between these extremes with extraordinary sophistication, drawing on both European and indigenous intellectual traditions as resources for situated analysis, and in doing so he modelled a form of postcolonial intellectual practice that remains as important and as difficult as it was in his own time.

The Critique of Ideological Thinking

One of the most distinctive and practically important elements of Razzaq's epistemological position was his sustained critique of ideological thinking in all its forms. By ideological thinking, Razzaq meant the tendency to subordinate honest analysis of concrete reality to the maintenance of a predetermined theoretical or political commitment: to see the world not as it is but as the ideology requires it to be, and to distort or ignore evidence that does not fit the ideological framework.

This critique was applied, with equal sharpness, to all the major ideological currents of his time. His critique of Pakistani nationalism was not merely a political objection to specific policies of the Pakistani government; it was a philosophical objection to the two-nation theory as an analytical framework that distorted historical reality in the service of a political programme. His critique of Bengali nationalist ideology was similarly not merely a political objection to specific positions of the Awami League or other nationalist organizations; it was a philosophical objection to the tendency of nationalist ideology to produce selective and distorting readings of historical and social reality in the service of political mobilization.

His critique of Marxist ideology was particularly interesting and sophisticated. Razzaq was not anti-Marxist in the simple sense of being opposed to socialist economic analysis or to the materialist analysis of social relations. He drew extensively on Marxist frameworks in his analysis of colonial economic history, in his understanding of the relationship between class interests and political choices, and in his account of the structural conditions of postcolonial governance. But he was deeply suspicious of Marxism as an ideological system, as a comprehensive framework that claimed to provide definitive and certain answers to all political, social, and historical questions, and that required the subordination of honest inquiry to the maintenance of doctrinal orthodoxy. The history of the twentieth century, which he witnessed in its full tragic complexity, provided him with abundant evidence of the ways in which Marxist ideology, when adopted as a complete and certain system, could distort political judgment,

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justify violence, and produce outcomes that were the precise opposite of the emancipatory goals its adherents claimed to be pursuing.

This critique of ideological thinking has extraordinary contemporary relevance, at a moment when ideological polarization, the tendency to see political reality through the lens of predetermined partisan commitments, has reached levels of intensity that Razzaq would have found deeply alarming. The politics of Bangladesh since 1971, and indeed the broader politics of South Asia and the world, has been marked by an increasing tendency toward the kind of ideological simplification that Razzaq spent his life resisting: the reduction of complex political realities to simple binary choices, the subordination of honest analysis to partisan loyalty, the willingness to distort or deny evidence that does not support the preferred political narrative. His analytical tradition, with its insistence on the primacy of concrete evidence, the value of comparative reference, and the irreducible complexity of political reality, offers a direct and powerful alternative to this tendency.

The Philosophy of Political Judgment

Closely related to Razzaq's epistemological critique of ideology is what might be called his philosophy of political judgment: his account of what good political analysis requires and how it differs from bad political analysis.

Good political analysis, on Razzaq's implicit account, requires several qualities that are in tension with the demands of political advocacy. It requires the willingness to follow the analysis wherever it leads, even when the conclusions are uncomfortable or inconvenient for positions one is inclined to favour. It requires the patience to gather and examine evidence from multiple sources before drawing conclusions, rather than selecting evidence that confirms predetermined positions. It requires the intellectual humility to acknowledge the limits of one's knowledge and the provisionality of one's conclusions, rather than presenting uncertain analyses as definitive truths. It requires the analytical depth to identify structural causes rather than stopping at the level of surface appearances or individual intentions. And it requires the breadth of comparative reference to identify what is genuinely specific about the situation being analyzed rather than assuming that it follows the patterns established elsewhere.

These qualities are, as Razzaq well understood, not easy to cultivate and not comfortable to exercise. The pressure toward ideological simplification, toward the selection of evidence that confirms preferred conclusions, toward the pretence of certainty where genuine uncertainty exists, is constant in any society where political stakes are high and where intellectual positions have political consequences. Razzaq's ability to resist this pressure consistently, throughout a long career conducted in conditions of considerable political intensity, was one of the most remarkable aspects of his intellectual character, and one of the most important dimensions of the tradition he sought to transmit.

The failure of subsequent Bangladeshi intellectual life to consistently maintain the standard he set in this respect is not surprising; the pressure toward ideological thinking is too strong and too constant to be completely resisted by all those who have been shaped by his tradition. But the standard itself remains available as a point of reference and a source of critical self-correction,

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and the moments when Bangladeshi intellectual life has most closely approached that standard have been the moments when his tradition has been most effectively active.

Chapter Twenty-Two: The Political Theory: Democracy, Sovereignty, and the Architecture of Freedom

The Democratic Commitment

It is necessary, in any comprehensive account of Razzaq's intellectual contribution, to be clear and specific about his commitment to democratic governance. This commitment is sometimes described in imprecise terms, as a general preference for freedom or for liberal values, that do not capture its specific philosophical content. The commitment was, in fact, deeply grounded in a sophisticated political theory that deserves careful examination.

Razzaq's commitment to democracy was not a product of Western political fashion or of the influence of his studies at the London School of Economics, though those studies certainly reinforced and deepened it. It was grounded, fundamentally, in his analysis of the specific historical experience of the people of Bengal and South Asia with non-democratic governance. He had seen, at first hand, what colonial autocracy produced: the subordination of the welfare of millions of ordinary people to the interests of an imperial power that was accountable to no constituency in the subject territory. He had seen, equally at first hand, what military autocracy produced in the Pakistan context: the progressive exclusion of the Bengali majority from political power, the suppression of their language and culture, and the systematic diversion of economic resources from the east to the west. He had seen, in the Bangladesh context, what the corruption of democratic institutions produced: the erosion of accountability, the capture of the state by narrow partisan interests, and the ultimate resort to violence by those who found themselves excluded from the corrupted system.

The theoretical grounding of his democratic commitment drew on several distinct intellectual traditions. From Laski and the democratic socialist tradition at the LSE, he took the argument that democratic governance was not merely a procedural preference but a substantive requirement of human dignity: that the capacity for self-governance, the capacity to participate meaningfully in the decisions that shape one's collective life, was a fundamental human need whose frustration produced both individual suffering and social pathology. From the indigenous Bangladeshi experience, he took the evidence that this need was not merely a philosophical abstraction but a living reality, expressed in the language movement, in the independence movement, and in the persistent popular desire for democratic self-governance even after repeated experiences of its corruption and suppression.

His democratic theory had a specific and important dimension that distinguished it from simple majoritarianism. Razzaq was acutely aware, throughout his career, of the dangers of what Tocqueville had called the tyranny of the majority: the tendency of democratic majorities, when unchecked by institutional constraints, to subordinate the rights and interests of minorities to the preferences of the dominant group. His awareness of this danger was grounded not in abstract

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philosophy but in the specific historical experience of Bengal, where the majority-minority dynamics of Hindu-Muslim relations had repeatedly produced political configurations in which the rights and interests of one community were subordinated to those of the other.

This awareness informed his commitment to constitutional constraints on democratic majorities: to judicial review, to fundamental rights protections, to federal or quasi-federal arrangements that gave minority communities institutional protection against majority domination, and to the principled separation of powers that prevented the concentration of authority in any single institution. These constitutional commitments were not, for Razzaq, mere technical provisions of constitutional design; they were structural expressions of a principled commitment to the equal dignity of all citizens and of all communities within a democratic polity.

Sovereignty, the State, and the Nation

One of the most sophisticated and least adequately analyzed aspects of Razzaq's political theory is his understanding of the relationship between sovereignty, the state, and the nation. These three concepts are often conflated in political discourse, but Razzaq's analysis, drawing on his deep reading of both Western and South Asian political theory, distinguished them sharply and drew important practical conclusions from that distinction.

The concept of sovereignty, in the tradition of Western political theory, refers to the ultimate authority within a political community: the source from which all legitimate authority derives and to which all authority is ultimately accountable. In the tradition that runs from Jean Bodin through Thomas Hobbes to John Austin, sovereignty is conceived as absolute, indivisible, and ultimately located in a single institution: the monarch, the parliament, or the constitutional order as a whole. This absolute conception of sovereignty was, for Razzaq, deeply problematic, not merely for abstract philosophical reasons but because of its specific historical consequences in the South Asian context.

The British colonial state had grounded its claim to authority in India in precisely this absolute conception of sovereignty: the Crown in Parliament was sovereign over all its territories, and that sovereignty admitted no limits or qualifications derived from the interests or rights of the colonized people. The Pakistani state had similarly grounded its legitimacy in an absolute conception of sovereignty: the constitutional framework of Pakistan was sovereign over its entire territory, and the specific cultural and linguistic interests of the Bengali majority could not be recognized as limits on that sovereignty. In both cases, the absolute conception of sovereignty had served as the theoretical justification for the subordination of the interests and rights of specific people to the authority of a state that did not represent them.

Razzaq's response to this problematic was not simply to reject the concept of sovereignty but to insist on its democratic grounding: sovereignty, legitimately conceived, resided ultimately not in any state institution but in the people whose collective self-governance the state was designed to facilitate. This democratic grounding of sovereignty had direct and specific implications for the relationship between the state and the nation, between the institutional apparatus of government and the living community of citizens whose collective self-governance it was supposed to serve. The state was not the sovereign; it was the institutional expression of a sovereignty that resided

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elsewhere, in the people, and its legitimacy was conditional on its genuine responsiveness to the interests and will of that people.

This theoretical position had important practical implications for his analysis of the specific political problems of Bangladesh. The failure of democratic governance in Bangladesh was not, on this analysis, simply a problem of bad leaders or corrupt institutions; it was a problem of the mismatch between the theoretical grounding of state authority in popular sovereignty and the actual institutional reality of a state that had progressively ceased to be genuinely accountable to the people in whose name it claimed to govern. Restoring democratic governance required not merely replacing specific leaders or reforming specific institutions but re-establishing the genuine practical connection between the exercise of state authority and the will and interests of the people whose sovereignty ultimately grounded that authority.

The Question of Bengali Muslim Identity: The Unresolved Tension

No account of Razzaq's political theory would be complete without a sustained engagement with what is perhaps the most profound and persistently relevant question in his entire intellectual output: the question of Bengali Muslim identity. This question, which he engaged with most directly in his essay on Bengali Muslims, has been the subject of continuous debate in Bangladeshi intellectual life since at least the 1940s, and its relevance has not diminished; if anything, the events of the early twenty-first century have given it a new urgency that makes Razzaq's analysis of it more important than ever.

The question, at its core, is this: what does it mean to be both Bengali and Muslim, and how are these two dimensions of identity to be related to each other in the construction of a political community? This question is not merely philosophical or cultural; it has direct and specific political implications for the kind of state Bangladesh should aspire to be, for the relationship between religion and constitutional governance, for the place of minority communities in Bangladeshi civic life, and for Bangladesh's engagement with the broader Islamic world.

Razzaq approached this question with characteristic honesty and characteristic complexity. He rejected, firmly and consistently, the position of Islamic identity that subordinated Bengali cultural and linguistic particularity to a universal Islamic identity: the position that had animated the two-nation theory and that had produced the experience of Pakistani political dominance that the independence movement had been a response to. He understood, from deep historical analysis and from personal experience, that this subordination was not a religious necessity but a specific political choice, grounded in specific interests, that misrepresented both the character of Islamic thought and the character of the Bengali Muslim experience.

But he equally rejected, with characteristic intellectual honesty, the position of secular Bengali nationalism that treated Islamic identity as simply irrelevant to the political life of a Bengali Muslim community, or as an obstacle to the construction of a genuinely democratic and pluralist polity. He understood that Islamic identity was a genuine and deep part of the self-understanding of the Bengali Muslim community, that it shaped people's moral commitments and their understanding of the good life in ways that could not be dismissed as mere false consciousness,

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and that any political framework that failed to take it seriously as a source of meaning and of moral commitment would be both intellectually dishonest and practically ineffective.

His resolution of this tension, to the extent that he arrived at one, was not a theoretical formula but a practical orientation: an insistence that the specific content of both Bengali and Islamic identity was always historically produced, always in process, always subject to interpretation and reinterpretation in the light of new experiences and new challenges, and that the task of a genuinely democratic and genuinely Islamic political community was not to fix these identities in their present form but to allow them to develop through free and honest engagement with the full complexity of the community's historical experience and contemporary situation.

This is not an easy or a comfortable position. It does not provide the simple formula that political mobilization demands: the clear identification of what we are and what we believe and what we want that can be translated into political programmes and political loyalties. But it is an honest position, and its honesty is precisely its value: it keeps open the space for the kind of genuine self-reflection and genuine engagement with others that democratic political life requires, and it resists the temptation to premature closure that has, repeatedly, produced political catastrophe in the Bangladeshi and South Asian context.

The relevance of this position to the post-2024 political situation in Bangladesh is direct and profound. The question of the relationship between Islamic and democratic values in the governance of Bangladesh, the question of how to build a genuinely inclusive political community that respects both the Islamic identity of the majority and the rights and interests of religious minorities, the question of how to develop political institutions that are both genuinely responsive to the values and commitments of the Bengali Muslim community and genuinely protective of the universal human rights and democratic freedoms that those institutions are supposed to embody: these are precisely the questions that the post-2024 political transition is raising, and Razzaq's analytical tradition provides, not easy answers, but the most sophisticated available framework for thinking through them honestly.

Chapter Twenty-Three: Economic Philosophy Revisited: The Political Economy of Development and Justice

The Historical Critique of Colonial Economics

Razzaq's economic philosophy, as we have seen in Part Four of this textbook, was grounded in a deep historical analysis of the relationship between colonial economic policy and the conditions of economic underdevelopment that postcolonial Bangladesh inherited. This historical critique was not merely retrospective; it was the foundation of a positive analysis of what genuine economic development required and what policies were most likely to advance it.

The core of his economic analysis was the insight, drawn from careful reading of both economic history and political economy, that Bengal's poverty was not a natural condition but a historically produced one. The destruction of Bengal's textile industry, the disruption of its trading networks,

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the extraction of agricultural surplus through the revenue system, the subordination of indigenous commercial interests to the requirements of metropolitan capital: these were the specific mechanisms through which colonial economic policy had produced the conditions of poverty and underdevelopment that postcolonial Bangladesh inherited. Understanding these mechanisms was not merely an exercise in historical grievance; it was the necessary foundation for understanding what specific kinds of economic policy were required to overcome the conditions they had created.

This historical analysis led Razzaq to a set of economic commitments that were broadly consistent with what would later be called developmental economics or the economics of catching up, but that he arrived at through historical and political analysis rather than through the technical apparatus of formal economics. He was committed to the use of state policy to promote domestic industrialization and the development of indigenous productive capacity, particularly in the sectors where Bengali labour and ingenuity had historically shown the greatest strength. He was committed to the protection of domestic industries against the full force of international competition before they had developed the productive capacity to compete on equal terms. He was committed to the investment of public resources in education, research, and infrastructure as the conditions for long-term productive development. And he was committed to the distribution of the gains from development in ways that reduced rather than exacerbated the existing inequalities of wealth and opportunity.

These commitments were not dogmatic; they were pragmatic expressions of a historical and structural analysis that could, in principle, be revised in the light of new evidence or changed circumstances. Razzaq was not the kind of thinker who believed that any economic policy was correct in all circumstances; he believed that economic policy was an exercise in practical reasoning about specific situations, and that the quality of that reasoning depended on the quality of the historical and structural analysis that informed it.

The Labor Question and Social Justice

One of the dimensions of Razzaq's economic thought that has received insufficient attention in the existing scholarship is his engagement with the labor question: with the conditions of the working class, both agricultural and industrial, and with the implications of those conditions for the broader social justice goals that he regarded as inseparable from genuine economic development.

Razzaq's awareness of the condition of Bengal's agricultural labor force was grounded in both personal experience and systematic analysis. He was born in a rural environment, and he maintained throughout his life the connection to the village and the village economy that his urban and cosmopolitan intellectual career might have been expected to dissolve. He understood, from direct experience as well as from reading, that the condition of the agricultural laborer in Bangladesh was one of profound economic vulnerability: vulnerability to the arbitrary authority of landowners, to the fluctuations of weather and harvest, to the demands of the money-lending system that kept peasant families in cycles of debt from which escape was nearly impossible, and to the broader structural conditions of a labor market in which the supply of agricultural labor consistently exceeded the demand, driving wages to subsistence levels and below.

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His analysis of this condition drew on the tradition of political economy in which he had been trained, which included the Ricardian analysis of the relationship between wages, profits, and rent, the Marxian analysis of the relationship between capital and labor, and the more specifically South Asian analysis of the conditions of agrarian production in the colonial context. But it also drew on the broader moral and political commitment, which was not separable from his economic analysis, that no genuine development was possible in a society that tolerated the indefinite perpetuation of conditions of extreme inequality and economic vulnerability for the majority of its population.

This moral dimension of his economic thought is important and should not be reduced to mere sentimentality or to the application of a predetermined ideological formula. It was grounded in a specific philosophical conviction: that economic development was not an end in itself but a means to the broader end of human flourishing, and that human flourishing required not merely the satisfaction of material needs but the possession of the social and political conditions for genuine agency, genuine participation in the decisions that shaped one's life, and genuine freedom from arbitrary authority and economic vulnerability. A development that increased aggregate national income while leaving the majority of the population in conditions of economic insecurity and political marginalization was not, on this view, genuine development at all; it was the production of prosperity for the few at the cost of continuing misery for the many.

This position is directly relevant to the contemporary political economy of Bangladesh, which has, in the years since Razzaq's death, achieved remarkable economic growth but has done so in ways that have produced significant inequalities and that have not fully translated into the conditions of broad-based human flourishing that his framework demanded. Bangladesh's impressive performance on indicators of poverty reduction and human development, particularly in areas like women's education, child mortality, and economic inclusion, represents the kind of broad-based development that his analysis would recognize as genuine. But the persistence of extreme inequality, the conditions of labor in the garment industry that have been repeatedly exposed by disasters and labor actions, and the political economy of development that has concentrated economic gains in the hands of a small and politically connected elite, all of these represent the ways in which the development trajectory has diverged from the vision that his analysis articulated.

The Ecology of the Economy

One of the most prescient aspects of Razzaq's economic thinking, which was ahead of its time in the most literal sense, was his awareness of the ecological dimensions of economic development in the specific context of the Bengal delta. This awareness was not developed in the form of a systematic ecological economics, which did not exist as a recognized field in his time; it was expressed, rather, in a series of insights and observations about the relationship between the specific ecological character of the delta and the conditions and possibilities of economic development within it.

Razzaq understood the Bengal delta as an ecological system of extraordinary complexity and dynamism, shaped by the interaction of three great river systems and by the annual cycle of monsoon flooding and dry-season low water that had structured the agriculture and the

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settlement patterns of the delta for millennia. He understood that the specific forms of agricultural production that had evolved in this context, the rice cultivation of the flood plains, the jute cultivation of the higher ground, the fisheries of the rivers and wetlands, were not merely economic activities but adaptive responses to the specific ecological conditions of the delta, developed over centuries of practical experience and encoding an enormous amount of empirically validated knowledge about how to live productively in this specific environment.

His concern about the disruption of these adaptive systems by ill-considered development policies was not romantic conservatism or resistance to change. It was the recognition that the ecological knowledge encoded in the existing agricultural and productive systems was a genuine resource for development, and that its destruction in the name of modernization would impose costs on the development process that simple productivity calculations would fail to capture. The loss of the traditional fisheries of the Bengal delta to water pollution and habitat destruction, for example, was not merely an aesthetic loss or a loss of cultural heritage; it was the destruction of a protein source that had sustained millions of people and the loss of a system of production that had adapted over centuries to the specific conditions of the delta environment.

This awareness has become, in the decades since Razzaq's death and with the gathering reality of climate change, more rather than less relevant. The Bangladesh that Razzaq knew in the second half of the twentieth century faces, in the twenty-first century, an ecological crisis of extraordinary severity: rising sea levels, intensifying cyclones, increasing salinity of coastal soils and freshwater sources, and the threat of large-scale displacement of coastal populations. These challenges are not merely environmental; they are economic, social, and political challenges of the highest order, and the quality of Bangladesh's response to them will, in large measure, determine the country's ability to sustain the development gains of the past several decades.

Razzaq's ecological sensitivity, his awareness of the relationship between the specific environmental conditions of the delta and the forms of human organization appropriate to those conditions, provides a framework for thinking about these challenges that is more useful than either the narrow technical approaches of conventional environmental management or the romantic environmentalism that treats development and ecological sustainability as inherently incompatible. His framework suggests that the path to ecological sustainability in the Bangladesh context runs through the same kind of historically grounded, structurally aware, ecologically sensitive analysis that he brought to all the other great challenges of his time.

Chapter Twenty-Four: The Jurisprudential Legacy: Constitutional Theory, Rule of Law, and the Architecture of Democratic Governance

Constitutional Foundations and Their Vulnerabilities

Razzaq's engagement with questions of constitutional design and constitutional theory was, as we have seen, both practically significant and intellectually sophisticated. He served as an advisor to East Pakistani members of the Constituent Assembly during the framing of the first constitution of Pakistan in 1956, a role that brought him directly into contact with the practical

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challenges of constitutional design in a postcolonial context. He was consulted by the architects of Bangladesh's own constitutional order in 1972, contributing to the debates about the foundational principles of the new state. And he reflected throughout his career on the theoretical questions about constitutional governance that these practical engagements raised.

His jurisprudential thinking began with a fundamental question: what is a constitution for? This question seems simple, but its answer is far from obvious, and the answers that different constitutional traditions have given to it have profound implications for the design of constitutional institutions. The most common answer in the tradition of liberal constitutionalism is that a constitution is a mechanism for limiting government power: a set of rules that establishes what the government may and may not do, that allocates authority among different branches of government in ways that prevent its dangerous concentration, and that protects individual rights and freedoms against the encroachments of state power.

Razzaq accepted this answer as far as it went, but he regarded it as incomplete. A constitution was not merely a mechanism for limiting power; it was a mechanism for organizing collective self-governance, for establishing the institutional conditions under which a democratic community could make the decisions that shaped its collective life, and for ensuring that those decisions were made in ways that were genuinely responsive to the interests and values of all the community's members rather than merely those of its most powerful factions.

This more expansive understanding of constitutional purposes had specific implications for constitutional design. A constitution that focused exclusively on limiting government power and protecting individual rights might succeed in preventing specific forms of tyranny while failing to establish the conditions for genuine democratic self-governance: if the institutions designed to represent the people were weak, captured by narrow interests, or structurally biased toward the preferences of the wealthy and powerful, then the formal protections of the constitution would not produce the democratic governance they were supposed to guarantee.

This concern about the gap between formal constitutional provisions and the actual conditions of democratic governance was central to Razzaq's jurisprudential thinking and was directly informed by his experience of the specific constitutional histories of both Pakistan and Bangladesh. Pakistan's early constitutional history, from the 1956 constitution to the military coups of 1958 and 1969, provided a detailed case study in the failure of formal constitutional provisions to establish the conditions for genuine democratic governance in the absence of the social and institutional foundations that those provisions presupposed. Bangladesh's own constitutional history, from the 1972 constitution through the amendments and suspensions that followed, provided a continuing case study in the same dynamic.

His analysis of these failures was not simply technical but structural. The constitutional provisions that were supposed to guarantee democratic governance in both countries failed not primarily because they were poorly designed, though in some respects they were, but because the social and institutional conditions that those provisions presupposed, including effective political parties, an independent judiciary, a free press, a politically active civil society, and a citizenry with the information and the institutional access necessary to hold their government accountable,

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were not sufficiently developed to support the constitutional framework that formal provisions established.

This structural analysis led Razzaq to a position that was simultaneously more modest and more ambitious than conventional constitutional theory: more modest because it acknowledged that formal constitutional provisions were not sufficient by themselves to guarantee democratic governance, and more ambitious because it called for the broader social and institutional development that genuine democratic governance required. This position is directly relevant to the post-2024 constitutional reform process in Bangladesh, which faces precisely the challenge of not merely redesigning the formal provisions of the constitution but of building the social and institutional foundations that a genuinely democratic constitutional order requires.

The Independence of the Judiciary

Among the specific constitutional questions that Razzaq engaged with, the independence of the judiciary was perhaps the most fundamental. His commitment to judicial independence was grounded not in abstract liberal philosophy but in his specific analysis of the role that the courts had played, and had failed to play, in the constitutional histories of both Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The courts in South Asia have occupied a peculiar and sometimes contradictory position in the constitutional order. On the one hand, they have been, at their best, important centres of institutional resistance to executive overreach: the courts that refused to validate the suspension of fundamental rights during periods of emergency governance, the judges who struck down executive orders that exceeded constitutional authority, the legal proceedings that held specific officials accountable for specific violations of legal rights, these have been genuine contributions to the constitutional order and genuine protections of democratic values. On the other hand, the courts have also been, at their worst, instruments of political power: the courts that validated the constitutional amendments that concentrated executive authority, the judges appointed through politically motivated processes whose decisions reflected the preferences of their appointing authorities, the legal proceedings that were used to harass and intimidate political opponents.

Razzaq's analysis of this dual character of the judiciary drew on his understanding of the structural conditions that determined which of these two tendencies predominated. Judicial independence, he argued, was not simply a matter of formal constitutional provision, of specific clauses guaranteeing security of tenure or limiting the executive's power of appointment. It was a matter of the entire institutional culture of the legal system: the values and professional norms of the legal profession, the quality of legal education and its orientation toward the rule of law rather than toward political utility, the institutional memory and precedent that allowed the courts to maintain consistent principles across changes of government, and the political culture more broadly, including the willingness of political actors to accept and implement judicial decisions that went against their interests.

The erosion of judicial independence in Bangladesh under the Hasina government, which was one of the most widely documented dimensions of the authoritarian consolidation that the 2024 uprising was a response to, illustrates precisely the dynamic that Razzaq's analysis predicted. The

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appointment of politically loyal judges, the amendment of the constitution to remove the Supreme Court's power of judicial review over constitutional amendments, the use of contempt proceedings and security legislation to silence judicial critics: all of these represented the progressive dismantling of the institutional conditions for judicial independence that his jurisprudential framework identified as essential to democratic governance.

The restoration of judicial independence is accordingly one of the central challenges of the post-2024 reform process, and Razzaq's analysis provides important guidance for how that challenge should be approached. Formal constitutional provisions for judicial independence are necessary but not sufficient; what is also required is the rebuilding of the institutional culture, the professional norms, and the political commitments that make those provisions effective in practice.

Legal Pluralism and Its Challenge

One of the most sophisticated and intellectually productive aspects of Razzaq's jurisprudential thinking was his engagement with the question of legal pluralism: the coexistence, within a single political community, of multiple legal systems or traditions that may be in tension with each other and that may not all be equally compatible with the constitutional framework of the state.

Bangladesh, like most postcolonial states, inherited a legal system that was already pluralist in this sense: a mixture of the common law tradition brought by the British colonial administration, the personal law systems of different religious communities (principally Hindu and Muslim personal law governing family matters), customary law traditions in specific communities, and, in the constitutional framework of 1972, a commitment to fundamental rights and democratic governance that drew on both the universal human rights tradition and the specific values of the independence movement.

The tensions between these different legal systems were not merely technical problems of legal administration; they were expressions of the deeper tensions between different sources of normative authority, between the colonial legal inheritance and indigenous normative systems, between the universal claims of human rights law and the particular claims of religious community law, between the constitutional commitment to gender equality and the gender hierarchies encoded in personal law systems. Razzaq's analysis of these tensions was characteristically structural: he saw them not as problems that could be resolved by clever legal drafting but as expressions of the deeper social and cultural diversity of Bangladeshi society, a diversity that any adequate legal framework would need to accommodate and manage rather than simply suppress.

His position on the specific question of the relationship between Islamic law and the constitutional framework of Bangladesh was one of the most nuanced and carefully considered aspects of his jurisprudential thinking. He was not, as we have seen, a secularist in the sense of someone who wanted to eliminate Islamic principles from public life. But he was deeply committed to the constitutional framework of democratic governance and fundamental rights as the appropriate organizing principle for the political life of a diverse community, and he

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understood that this commitment required that no single religious tradition, however important to the majority of the population, could be given the status of binding constitutional law in ways that overrode the rights of minority communities or the fundamental rights protections of the constitutional framework.

This position, which drew on both his reading of Islamic jurisprudential theory and his understanding of constitutional democratic governance, was ahead of its time in the 1970s and 1980s and remains controversial in Bangladesh today. The ongoing debate about the relationship between Bangladesh's 1972 constitutional commitment to secularism, its 1988 amendment making Islam the state religion, and its commitment to fundamental rights and democratic governance is precisely the debate that his jurisprudential analysis engaged, and the quality of that engagement has not been surpassed in the subsequent literature.

Chapter Twenty-Five: The Comparative Mind: Razzaq Among the World's Postcolonial Thinkers

The Global Context of Postcolonial Intellectual Life

Professor Abdur Razzaq belonged to a generation of postcolonial intellectuals who shared, despite their geographical and cultural diversity, a set of fundamental intellectual challenges: how to think clearly and honestly about the specific political and cultural situation of their societies after the end of formal colonial rule; how to draw on both indigenous intellectual traditions and the intellectual resources of European modernity without either uncritically accepting European intellectual authority or retreating into a defensive cultural nationalism that cut their societies off from genuinely valuable resources; and how to develop intellectual frameworks adequate to the unprecedented challenges of postcolonial state-building, economic development, and the construction of democratic political cultures in societies shaped by the specific distortions of the colonial experience.

This generation of postcolonial intellectuals included, in the Caribbean, C.L.R. James and Frantz Fanon; in Africa, Julius Nyerere and Leopold Senghor and, later, Wole Soyinka and Ngugi wa Thiong'o; in India, Jawaharlal Nehru and B.R. Ambedkar and, in a later generation, Ranajit Guha and the Subaltern Studies collective; in Pakistan, Mohammed Iqbal and Faiz Ahmed Faiz; and in many other parts of the formerly colonized world, a rich array of thinkers who were grappling with similar questions from their specific historical and cultural positions.

The comparative study of Razzaq in relation to these other figures is a scholarly project that has barely begun, but it is one that promises to be intellectually rich and genuinely illuminating. The comparisons reveal both the distinctive specificity of Razzaq's contribution and the common patterns that link his work to the broader project of postcolonial intellectual engagement.

Razzaq and C.L.R. James: The Marxian and the Empirical

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The comparison between Razzaq and C.L.R. James is particularly illuminating because it places the two most important intellectual characteristics of each thinker in productive tension. James, the Trinidadian historian, literary critic, and political theorist, was one of the most brilliant and wide-ranging intellectuals of the twentieth century, and his work on Caribbean history, on the Haitian revolution, on cricket as a social institution, and on the theory of democratic self-governance from below, shares important intellectual characteristics with Razzaq's work while differing from it in equally important ways.

Both James and Razzaq were committed to the analysis of colonial history as a history of specific human communities shaped by specific material conditions, rather than merely as a history of imperial decisions and their effects. Both were deeply influenced by the tradition of historical materialism while resisting its reduction to a simple economic determinism. Both were committed to democratic self-governance as the appropriate form of political life for postcolonial societies, and both were deeply sceptical of the claim that the achievement of formal independence automatically produced the conditions for genuine democratic self-governance.

The difference between them is equally instructive. James was fundamentally a theorist: his intellectual mode was synthetic and grand, oriented toward the construction of comprehensive frameworks for understanding the dynamics of capitalism, colonialism, and liberation. His masterwork, The Black Jacobins, is a work of extraordinary historical analysis, but it is also and fundamentally a work of theoretical argument: an argument about the relationship between the Haitian revolution and the French revolution, about the role of the enslaved in their own liberation, about the dynamics of revolutionary transformation and counter-revolutionary reaction. His reading of Caribbean and broader world history was always in service of a theoretical argument that had clear political implications.

Razzaq's intellectual mode was almost the opposite of this. He was fundamentally empirical rather than synthetic, oriented toward the careful analysis of specific concrete situations rather than toward the construction of comprehensive theoretical frameworks. His resistance to grand theory was not a limitation but a methodological choice that reflected a specific philosophical conviction: that the complexity of political reality was too great to be captured in any theoretical framework, and that the attempt to reduce that complexity to a single explanatory scheme was always a form of intellectual distortion, however intellectually satisfying the resulting scheme might be.

The contrast between these two modes of intellectual engagement is not a contrast between superior and inferior approaches; it is a contrast between two different intellectual virtues, theoretical imagination and empirical rigor, that are both genuinely necessary and that complement each other when they are brought into dialogue. The postcolonial intellectual tradition would be impoverished without both James's theoretical boldness and Razzaq's empirical discipline, and the most productive intellectual engagements are those that bring both to bear on the same set of questions.

Razzaq and Ambedkar: The Democratic Project and Its Social Conditions

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The comparison between Razzaq and B.R. Ambedkar is perhaps the most philosophically rich of the possible comparisons, because it places in direct dialogue two of the most sophisticated political thinkers produced by the South Asian independence generation: thinkers who shared fundamental commitments to democratic governance, social justice, and the rule of law, but who arrived at those commitments from radically different social positions and who drew very different analytical conclusions from their shared commitments.

Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and the foremost intellectual of the Dalit liberation movement, was, like Razzaq, a deeply educated thinker who had studied in both India and abroad and who brought the resources of both Western political philosophy and indigenous Indian intellectual traditions to bear on the specific challenges of South Asian political development. He was, like Razzaq, a deeply historical thinker who understood the present conditions of South Asian society as the product of specific historical processes, rather than as natural or inevitable arrangements. And he was, like Razzaq, profoundly committed to the constitutional framework of democratic governance and fundamental rights as the appropriate institutional expression of the values of human dignity and political freedom.

But the social experience from which Ambedkar's intellectual project emerged was radically different from Razzaq's. Where Razzaq's primary experience was of the Muslim Bengali community's struggle for political recognition and autonomy against the double marginalisation of colonial rule and Hindu cultural dominance, Ambedkar's primary experience was of the Dalit community's struggle for social equality and human dignity against the caste hierarchy that the Hindu social order imposed and that the Congress-dominated independence movement was insufficiently willing to challenge. These different experiences produced different intellectual emphases: where Razzaq's political theory focused primarily on the structural conditions of democratic governance and the challenges of postcolonial state-building, Ambedkar's focused primarily on the relationship between democratic political institutions and the social structures of inequality and discrimination that prevented those institutions from working in genuinely egalitarian ways.

The dialogue between these two perspectives is enormously productive. Razzaq's structural analysis of the institutional conditions for democratic governance is enriched and corrected by Ambedkar's insistence on the social conditions for democratic citizenship: by the recognition that formal democratic institutions cannot produce genuine democratic governance in a society where the deep structures of social inequality prevent large sections of the population from exercising the civic capacities that democratic participation requires. Conversely, Ambedkar's insistence on the fundamental importance of social justice as a condition for genuine democracy is enriched and grounded by Razzaq's structural analysis of the institutional mechanisms through which social inequality is reproduced and perpetuated by the institutional inheritance of the colonial state.

The Bangladesh of the early twenty-first century needs both of these perspectives. The institutional reform agenda of the post-2024 political transition, important as it is, will not by itself produce the conditions for genuine democratic governance if it is not accompanied by the social transformation that addresses the deep structures of inequality, discrimination, and exclusion that the institutional reforms are designed to address. Conversely, the social

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transformation agenda will be ineffective without the institutional framework that gives it direction and makes it sustainable. Both Razzaq and Ambedkar understood this complementarity, and the dialogue between their traditions represents one of the richest intellectual resources available for thinking through the challenges of democratic development in the South Asian context.

Razzaq and Nyerere: The Question of Authentic Development

The comparison between Razzaq and Julius Nyerere, the founding president of Tanzania and one of the most intellectually sophisticated African postcolonial statesmen, illuminates a dimension of Razzaq's intellectual contribution that is often overlooked: his engagement with the question of what authentic or genuine development, as distinct from mere economic growth or modernization, actually requires.

Nyerere's Ujamaa philosophy, his attempt to ground Tanzanian development in the specific values and social practices of African communal life rather than in the adoption of either Western capitalist or Soviet socialist models, represented one of the most sustained attempts by a postcolonial leader to develop a genuinely indigenous approach to the challenges of development that was neither a capitulation to Western economic orthodoxy nor a naive rejection of all that Western development experience had to offer.

Razzaq never developed anything quite as systematic as Ujamaa philosophy, and his temperamental inclination toward empirical analysis rather than theoretical synthesis would have made such a systematic development unlikely. But his insistence on grounding development analysis in the specific historical and cultural conditions of Bengal, his awareness of the ecological dimensions of development in the delta context, and his commitment to a vision of development that served the broad welfare of the population rather than merely the interests of the modernising elite, all of these reflect a philosophical orientation that is closely parallel to Nyerere's, and that faces similar challenges and limitations.

The primary challenge for both thinkers was the same: how to articulate a vision of development that was genuinely responsive to the specific conditions and values of a specific society without becoming a defensive and ultimately stifling cultural nationalism that prevented the society from accessing genuinely valuable resources from other traditions and contexts. Nyerere's Ujamaa experience provides an instructive, if mixed, case study in the possibilities and limitations of this kind of culturally grounded development philosophy, and the lessons of that experience are directly relevant to thinking about the kind of development approach that Razzaq's framework would counsel for contemporary Bangladesh.

Chapter Twenty-Six: The Controversies and Their Meanings

The Pakistan Support Question

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Any honest account of Razzaq's intellectual biography must engage directly and seriously with the most significant controversy surrounding his legacy: the question of his early support for the Pakistan Movement and the implications of that support for the interpretation of his later intellectual commitments.

The historical fact is established: Razzaq, like many Muslim Bengali intellectuals of his generation, supported the Pakistan Movement in the 1940s. The Bangla Academy's Director General Professor Azam confirmed at the November 2024 commemoration that Razzaq was a supporter of both the Pakistan Movement and the Bangladesh Movement, arguing for both positions with consistent intellectual engagement. This is not a simple or comfortable fact for those who wish to present Razzaq as a straightforwardly consistent champion of democratic and pluralist values throughout his entire career. It requires a more nuanced interpretation of his intellectual development.

The most intellectually honest interpretation of Razzaq's support for the Pakistan Movement is the one that takes seriously the specific historical context in which that support was expressed. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan was not simply an assertion of religious nationalism in its most narrow and exclusive form; it was also, and perhaps primarily for many of its educated supporters, a demand for the protection of Muslim political interests in a post-British India that would inevitably be dominated by the numerically larger Hindu community and by the Congress Party that claimed to speak for all Indians but that, on many specific questions of economic and cultural policy, reflected Hindu upper-caste interests more than it reflected the interests of Muslim communities.

For a Muslim Bengali intellectual of Razzaq's generation and social background, the question of whether a united India or a separate Pakistan offered better prospects for the protection of Muslim Bengali interests and for the genuine participation of Muslim Bengalis in the political and economic life of their own society was a genuinely difficult question, not susceptible to a simple or confident answer. The choice was not between a good option and a bad one but between two uncertain and imperfect options, each of which offered some protections and some risks. That Razzaq initially judged Pakistan to be the better option, and later revised that judgment in the light of the experience of Pakistani governance, is not evidence of intellectual inconsistency or of moral failure; it is evidence of exactly the intellectual quality that he most valued and most modelled for his students: the willingness to revise one's conclusions in the light of experience.

The intellectual journey from Pakistan support to Bangladesh independence advocacy was not a simple reversal; it was a continuous engagement with the same fundamental question, asked in the light of changing evidence. The question was always: what political framework most effectively serves the interests of the Bengali Muslim community in terms of genuine democratic self-governance, cultural and linguistic freedom, and economic welfare? The answer changed as the evidence of Pakistani governance revealed the ways in which the political framework of Pakistan systematically failed to serve those interests, and as the evidence of the Bengali nationalist movement revealed the possibility of an alternative framework that could serve them better.

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The Non-Writing Controversy

A second significant controversy in the reception of Razzaq's legacy concerns his choice not to write: the decision to build his intellectual contribution entirely through teaching and conversation rather than through the production of written texts. This choice has attracted both admiration and criticism, and the criticism deserves serious engagement.

The admiring interpretation of the non-writing is the one that this textbook has mainly advanced: the interpretation that treats it as a deliberate philosophical choice, grounded in a Socratic understanding of the limitations of writing as a medium for genuine intellectual transmission, and as an expression of a deep commitment to the oral tradition of teaching as the most adequate form of philosophical pedagogy. This interpretation has much to recommend it, and it captures something genuinely important about Razzaq's intellectual practice.

But the critical interpretation also has genuine force. The most serious form of this criticism is not personal but structural: it is the argument that Razzaq's refusal to write imposed severe limitations on the transmission and preservation of his intellectual contribution, limitations that have had real and lasting negative consequences for the intellectual life of Bangladesh. If he had written, the argument goes, his analyses would have been available to a much wider audience than the students who had the privilege of sitting in his presence, would have been accessible to subsequent generations without the distortion and selective memory that oral transmission inevitably introduces, would have been available for the kind of rigorous scholarly engagement and critical scrutiny that written texts make possible, and would have been capable of speaking directly to the intellectual challenges of times and contexts that he could not have anticipated.

This criticism is serious and partially valid. The preservation of Razzaq's intellectual contribution has been, as this textbook has demonstrated, significantly more difficult and more uncertain than the preservation of comparable intellectual contributions that were committed to writing. The reliance on the accounts of his students, the inevitable processes of selective memory and interpretive distortion that those accounts reflect, the impossibility of subjecting his actual positions to the kind of direct textual scrutiny that written sources make possible: these are genuine limitations that have real intellectual consequences.

The most adequate response to this criticism is not to deny its force but to insist that it does not settle the question of whether Razzaq's choice was, all things considered, a bad one. The choice to write comes with its own limitations and distortions: the tendency of written texts to fossilise positions that were genuinely provisional and evolving, to misrepresent the texture of a living intellectual practice through the necessary simplifications of formal argument, and to create the false impression that the questions a thinker engaged with are settled rather than still open. Razzaq's intellectual contribution, precisely because it was not fossilised in written texts, has remained more alive, more open, and more capable of productive adaptation to new challenges than it might have been if it had been fixed in the form of systematic treatises. The living tradition of his teaching continues to generate new intellectual responses to new challenges in ways that a fixed textual corpus, however rich, might not have sustained.

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Both of these considerations are real, and the ultimate judgment about whether the benefits of the non-writing outweighed its costs is, genuinely, a matter of reasonable disagreement. What is not reasonable is the attempt to resolve the question by ignoring either set of considerations, and any honest engagement with Razzaq's legacy must acknowledge both.

The Question of Influence and Attribution

A third area of genuine controversy concerns the question of how much of the intellectual contribution attributed to Razzaq was genuinely his own and how much was the creative work of his students. This question arises most sharply in connection with the works of Ahmed Sofa and Sardar Fazlul Karim, which are the primary documentary sources for Razzaq's thought, and the question of the relationship between the intellectual content of those works and the conversations and teaching of Razzaq that they purport to record.

The concern is not that either Sofa or Karim misrepresented their teacher deliberately; both are, by all accounts, men of intellectual integrity who were genuinely committed to preserving as accurately as possible their understanding of Razzaq's thought. The concern is the more subtle one that the process of translating oral teaching into written narrative inevitably involves interpretive choices that shape the material being transmitted, that the selection of what to record and what to omit from a relationship of years of conversation is itself a significant intellectual intervention, and that the framework within which the material is organized and presented reflects the intellectual commitments of the recorder as well as those of the person being recorded.

This concern is legitimate and important. It is not a reason to dismiss the works of Sofa and Karim as unreliable; it is a reason to read them as documents of a specific intellectual relationship, as records of what specific students understood and valued in their teacher's thinking, rather than as straightforward transcriptions of a body of thought that had an independent existence outside of those specific relationships.

The implication of this reading is actually more philosophically interesting than a simple concern about accuracy. It suggests that the intellectual tradition of Razzaq is not a single thing to be recovered and identified but a family of related intellectual orientations, all deriving from a common source but developed and expressed differently by different inheritors. The Razzaq of Ahmed Sofa is not quite the same as the Razzaq of Sardar Fazlul Karim, and neither is quite the same as the Razzaq of Salimullah Khan or the many other students who have written about their teacher. Each of these versions is a genuine and authentic expression of the tradition, and the diversity among them is not a problem to be resolved but a richness to be engaged with.

Chapter Twenty-Seven: The Pedagogical Legacy: Education, Critical Thinking, and the Future of Bangladeshi Intellectual Life

The Classroom as a Site of Political Formation

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One of the most underanalyzed dimensions of Razzaq's contribution is the specifically pedagogical dimension: his impact on the intellectual formation of successive generations of Bangladeshi students, and the implications of that impact for the broader intellectual and political culture of the country. This dimension is in some ways the most important of all, because it is the dimension through which his influence was most directly and most broadly transmitted, and because the question of what kind of intellectual formation is appropriate for a democratic political culture is one of the most fundamental questions that any society must engage with.

Razzaq's approach to teaching was, by all accounts, profoundly different from the conventional South Asian academic model of his time, which was heavily oriented toward the transmission of fixed bodies of information and the demonstration of mastery through the accurate reproduction of that information in examinations. This model of teaching had been inherited from the colonial educational system, which had designed it for the specific purpose of producing officials and professionals who could efficiently perform the functions required by the colonial administration: men and women who knew the relevant rules and procedures and could apply them accurately, rather than people who could question the assumptions underlying those rules and procedures or think critically about the purposes they served.

Razzaq's model of teaching was the opposite of this. His goal was not the transmission of information, though the acquisition of wide-ranging knowledge was certainly part of what he demanded of his students, but the formation of intellectual capacities: the capacity for critical analysis, for the interrogation of received assumptions, for the patient gathering and evaluation of evidence, and for the honest articulation of conclusions that the evidence supported even when those conclusions were politically inconvenient. He wanted, in the memorable phrase that recurs in the accounts of his students, to make his students think rather than to make them know.

This distinction between thinking and knowing is more profound than it might initially appear. The capacity to think, to engage genuinely and honestly with complex questions, to resist the temptation of comfortable simplifications, to follow the argument wherever it leads, is not simply a technical skill; it is a form of intellectual virtue, a moral achievement, that requires not merely training in specific analytical methods but the cultivation of a specific orientation toward knowledge and toward truth. This is why Razzaq's most profound influence was not on the specific positions his students held on specific questions but on their fundamental orientation toward intellectual engagement: the values and the habits of mind that determined how they approached questions in general.

The political implications of this pedagogical model are profound and far-reaching. A citizenry composed of people with the intellectual capacities that Razzaq sought to cultivate is a citizenry that is genuinely capable of the kind of critical engagement with political reality that democratic self-governance requires: capable of recognising and resisting propaganda and manipulation, capable of evaluating the claims of political leaders against the evidence, capable of forming independent political judgments based on serious engagement with complex realities, and capable of holding their representatives accountable for the quality of their governance rather than merely for their loyalty to partisan symbols.

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A citizenry that lacks these capacities, on the other hand, is a citizenry that is vulnerable to the kind of authoritarian populism that has been the characteristic political pathology of postcolonial South Asia: the appeal to simple emotional identifications, the creation of enemies to blame for collective misfortunes, the mobilisation of religious and ethnic loyalties to override the demands of rational political judgment, and the promise of strong leadership that will solve all problems without the hard work of democratic deliberation and institutional accountability. The 2024 uprising against the Hasina government, whatever its specific causes and dynamics, was in part an expression of the failure of exactly this kind of authoritarian populism, of its inability to satisfy the genuine aspirations of a citizenry that had, despite everything, developed the critical capacities to recognise when it was being manipulated.

The University and Its Responsibilities

Razzaq's pedagogical philosophy raised profound questions about the purpose and the responsibilities of the university as an institution in postcolonial South Asia. He was, throughout his career, deeply committed to the university as a site of genuine intellectual formation: a place where the cultivation of critical intelligence took precedence over the production of certified professionals, where the freedom of inquiry was protected against both governmental pressure and the tyranny of fashion and majority opinion, and where the living tradition of intellectual culture was transmitted to new generations through the practice of teaching at its best.

This commitment placed him in continuous tension with the actual institutional development of the University of Dhaka and of higher education in Bangladesh more broadly. The pressures on the university from the colonial state and its postcolonial successors to produce graduates useful to the state's administrative and economic functions, the pressures from political movements to align the university with their specific ideological commitments, and the pressures from students and families to provide credentials that would facilitate professional advancement rather than genuine intellectual formation: all of these pressures worked against the vision of the university as a site of genuine critical intellectual life.

Razzaq's response to these pressures was not passive accommodation but persistent resistance: the maintenance, in his own teaching practice and in the intellectual community he cultivated around himself, of the standards and the values of genuine intellectual life against the various forces that sought to subordinate them to other purposes. This resistance was not comfortable or costless; it was expressed in his willingness to criticise the policies of governments that were ostensibly committed to the same democratic values that he upheld, in his refusal to subordinate his intellectual judgments to the demands of political loyalty, and in his willingness to remain, throughout his career, in the institutionally marginal position of a lecturer who had never sought or accepted promotion to the professorial ranks that his intellectual standing would have made easily accessible if he had been willing to play the institutional game.

The implications of his pedagogical philosophy for the contemporary situation of higher education in Bangladesh are significant and directly relevant. The crisis of higher education in Bangladesh, manifested in the politicization of university administrations, the subordination of academic standards to partisan loyalties, the suppression of independent intellectual inquiry, and the declining quality of graduate education, is a crisis that Razzaq's analysis would trace to the

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same structural conditions that he identified throughout his career: the colonial inheritance of an educational system designed for certification rather than for genuine intellectual formation, the pressure of political movements to capture intellectual institutions for their own purposes, and the insufficient development of the institutional culture and professional norms that protect genuine intellectual life against these pressures.

The most important and urgent task of post-2024 educational reform in Bangladesh is not merely the restoration of formal university autonomy, important as that is, but the deeper task of rebuilding the intellectual culture of the university: the culture of honest inquiry, rigorous analysis, and genuine intellectual formation that Razzaq spent his career modelling and transmitting. This is a longer and harder task than the reform of institutional structures, but it is the more fundamental one, and his pedagogical legacy provides both the model and the motivation for undertaking it.

Chapter Twenty-Eight: The Psychological Portrait: Interiority, Asceticism, and the Life of the Mind

The Inner Life of an Ascetic Intellectual

Any comprehensive study of Professor Abdur Razzaq must eventually attempt what no purely academic analysis can fully achieve: a portrait of the inner life, of the psychological character, of the person behind the intellectual and the historical figure. The available evidence for this portrait is inevitably indirect and incomplete: the memoirs and reminiscences of students and colleagues who knew him personally, the accounts of his physical presence and his conversational manner, the occasional glimpses of his emotional and psychological life that appear in the more intimate passages of the biographical literature.

What emerges from this evidence is a portrait of considerable complexity and depth. The dominant impression is of a man who had achieved an unusual degree of psychological integration: a man in whom the intellectual and the personal, the public and the private, the commitment to truth and the commitment to human relationships, were not in tension but in harmony, each supporting and enriching the other. This integration was not effortless or automatic; it was, one feels, the product of a long process of intellectual and psychological development, of the gradual achievement of a kind of philosophical serenity that could accommodate uncertainty and complexity without the anxiety that uncertainty and complexity typically produce.

The title of Gyantapas, the knowledge ascetic, captures an important dimension of this psychological character. Asceticism, in the philosophical traditions of South Asia from which this concept draws, is not merely the practice of physical self-denial; it is the cultivation of a specific spiritual and psychological orientation: the freedom from attachment to the kinds of external rewards, social status, material comfort, institutional recognition, professional advancement, that typically motivate and direct human behaviour. The ascetic is free, in a

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specific and important sense: free to pursue the goods of the intellectual and spiritual life without the distortions that the desire for these external rewards typically introduces.

Razzaq's refusal of promotion, his willingness to remain a lecturer throughout his career, his simple lifestyle, his lack of interest in accumulating the symbols of academic success: all of these reflected this ascetic orientation. They were not, it must be emphasised, the products of inability or of some form of passive withdrawal from the world; they were the products of a deliberate choice, grounded in a specific understanding of what the intellectual life required and what compromised it. The man who had been offered and had declined numerous positions of institutional authority was not a man who lacked the confidence or the ambition to accept them; he was a man who had a clear and consistent understanding of what kind of authority was worth having and what kind was not.

The emotional warmth and generosity that all accounts of Razzaq emphasise is equally important to the psychological portrait, and it must be seen in relation to the ascetic quality rather than in contrast to it. The ascetic who is cold, withdrawn, and contemptuous of ordinary human relationships and concerns is not the Gyantapas that Razzaq embodied; he was, by all accounts, a man of extraordinary warmth, genuine pleasure in human company and conversation, and deep care for the people around him. The integration of ascetic discipline and human warmth, the combination of intellectual rigour and genuine affection, is one of the most remarkable aspects of his character and one that helps to explain his extraordinary influence as a teacher.

The Experience of Persecution and Its Effects

No psychological portrait of Razzaq would be complete without an honest engagement with the experience of persecution that marked his life, particularly the experience of the 1971 liberation war and its aftermath. The account of the Pakistani army's attempt to arrest him in March 1971, his narrow escape through the back of his house while the soldiers kicked at his front door, his period of hiding in the villages while his colleagues and friends were being killed, the military court's sentence of fourteen years' rigorous imprisonment in absentia: these were not merely political events but deeply personal experiences of fear, displacement, loss, and the confrontation with the possibility of one's own death.

The psychological effects of this experience, as far as they can be inferred from the available evidence, were complex and not fully resolved. On the one hand, the experience clearly deepened Razzaq's understanding of the specific dynamics of political terror and its effects on intellectual and cultural life, an understanding that informed his subsequent analysis of the conditions for democratic governance and the importance of the rule of law as a protection against the arbitrary exercise of violence. On the other hand, the experience of having witnessed the slaughter of colleagues and friends, having survived when others did not, having lived through a period of extraordinary historical violence, inevitably left traces in his psychological life that even the most composed and philosophically serene individual could not entirely avoid.

There are hints in the accounts of his later life of a certain sadness or melancholy beneath the warmth and the laughter: a quality of reflection, of awareness of loss, of the weight of historical experience, that gave his company a depth and a seriousness that those who knew him well

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recognized and valued. This quality was not incompatible with the warmth and the generosity; it was, rather, the shadow side of a full human life, the knowledge of what had been lost and what had been risked that gave the surviving goods their proper weight and value.

The Question of Regret

One of the most psychologically interesting questions about Razzaq's life is whether he had regrets: specifically, whether he regretted the choice not to write, which limited the transmission of his intellectual contribution; whether he regretted his early support for Pakistan, which he had later recognized as a historical error; and whether he regretted the various accommodations and compromises that the practical conditions of academic life had required of him over the decades.

The evidence on this question is indirect and ambiguous. There are accounts of him speaking, in his later years, with some frustration about the imperfections of oral transmission as a means of preserving intellectual ideas, suggesting at least some awareness of the limitations of his pedagogical choice. There are accounts of his deep and persistent analysis of the Pakistan movement, in his conversations with students, suggesting a continuing engagement with the question of what had gone wrong and why, that goes beyond simple detachment and suggests something more like genuine moral reflection on his own role in a historical tragedy.

But the dominant impression, from all the accounts, is of a man who had made his peace with his choices and with his life: who understood that every significant choice involves the renunciation of alternatives, that the intellectual tradition he had built through teaching was a genuine and lasting contribution even if it was a more fragile one than a written corpus would have been, and that the honesty and the integrity with which he had conducted his intellectual life were worth more than the alternative of having conducted it with less integrity but more impressive institutional and literary credentials.

This equanimity was not, it bears repeating, a form of complacency or of uncritical acceptance of the outcomes his choices had produced. It was the equanimity of a man who had thought deeply and honestly about the choices he had made, who understood their consequences, and who had arrived at a considered judgment that they had been, on balance, the right choices for the kind of intellectual and human life he was committed to living.

Chapter Twenty-Nine: The Legacy in Contemporary Bangladeshi Thought

The Students and Their Contributions

The most concrete and measurable dimension of Razzaq's legacy is the intellectual contribution of his students: the men and women who passed through his seminars and conversations and who went on to become major figures in Bangladeshi intellectual and political life. This contribution is so vast and so diverse that no brief account can do it justice, but it is worth attempting to characterize its main dimensions.

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The political contribution of his students is the most immediately visible dimension of his legacy. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh, was perhaps the most politically significant of his students, and the intellectual formation that Razzaq provided must be counted as one of the influences that shaped the character of the Bangladesh independence movement and of the post-independence political dispensation. But Mujib was one of more than seventy members of parliament who are credited as his students, and the political contribution of this group of men and women, across the full range of Bangladeshi political life from independence to the present, represents an extraordinary multiplier effect of his intellectual influence.

The intellectual and literary contribution of his students is equally impressive. Ahmed Sofa, who is widely regarded as one of the greatest Bengali prose writers of the twentieth century, explicitly acknowledged Razzaq as the central intellectual influence on his literary and critical work. Humayun Azad, the poet, novelist, and critic whose work pushed the boundaries of Bangladeshi literary and intellectual culture, similarly acknowledged his debt to Razzaq. Salimullah Khan, the philosopher and critic whose work on Bangladeshi cultural identity has been among the most sophisticated produced by the post-independence generation, is another product of the Razzaqian tradition. The quality and the range of the intellectual work produced by his students, across the fields of literature, history, political philosophy, cultural criticism, and social analysis, constitute a body of contribution that, taken as a whole, represents one of the most significant intellectual achievements in the history of Bangladesh.

The Foundation and Its Work

The Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation, established by his nephew Abul Khair Litu after Razzaq's death, represents the primary institutional expression of the effort to preserve and transmit his intellectual legacy. The foundation has undertaken several important projects: the preservation and digitization of his library, which contains thousands of volumes on philosophy, history, politics, and the humanities and which provides important documentary evidence of the intellectual resources he drew on throughout his career; the support of scholarship on his life and work; and the cultivation of the intellectual culture that he valued through programmes of education, research, and public intellectual engagement.

The Bengal Foundation, which grew from Abul Khair's broader cultural and philanthropic activities, has similarly been shaped by Razzaq's intellectual legacy, particularly in its commitment to the arts, to cultural preservation and promotion, and to the fostering of a rich and diverse intellectual culture in Bangladesh. The connection between Razzaq's vision of a society enriched by its cultural traditions and the Bengal Foundation's work in music, visual art, literature, and architecture is direct and explicit, and the foundation's activities represent one of the most vital and publicly visible expressions of his lasting influence.

The digitization project of the library is of particular scholarly importance. Razzaq's library, by all accounts, was one of the most remarkable private collections of scholarly resources in the history of Bangladesh, reflecting the extraordinary breadth of his intellectual interests and the global scope of his engagement with ideas. The systematic cataloguing and digitization of this

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collection, making it available to scholars and researchers, is a contribution to the intellectual life of Bangladesh that has only begun to be fully appreciated.

The 2022 Publication and Its Significance

The publication of Political Parties in India by University Press Limited in January 2022 was, as earlier parts of this textbook have examined, a landmark event in the scholarly reception of Razzaq's work. The significance of the publication, however, extends beyond its immediate scholarly reception to encompass broader questions about the relationship between Razzaq's intellectual contribution and the contemporary political moment in Bangladesh.

The thesis was originally completed around 1950, at the London School of Economics, as a doctoral dissertation on the development of political party systems in India. It was not published during Razzaq's lifetime, for reasons that remain somewhat unclear but that may reflect his characteristic indifference to the project of formal academic publication. When it was finally published, more than seventy years after its completion, it was received not merely as a historical document of intellectual interest but as a work of immediate analytical relevance to the contemporary political situation in both India and Bangladesh.

The central argument of the work, as it has been summarised in the scholarly reviews and commentaries that appeared after its publication, is an analysis of the structural conditions that shaped the development of political parties in colonial and early postcolonial India. Razzaq argued that the specific form that Indian party politics took was not merely the product of the ideological commitments or personal qualities of specific leaders but of the structural conditions of the colonial situation: the specific ways in which the colonial state had organised political participation, the specific social formations that the colonial economy had produced, and the specific dynamics of competitive mobilisation that the colonial constitutional framework had generated.

This structural analysis anticipates, as the scholarly commentaries have noted, the Cambridge School approach to the history of Indian nationalism associated with scholars like Anil Seal and John Gallagher, which developed in British academic historical writing in the 1970s and 1980s. The fact that Razzaq arrived at a structurally similar analytical approach independently, a decade or more before the Cambridge historians, is a significant indication of the originality and the quality of his political analysis.

The contemporary relevance of the work derives from the persistence of the structural conditions it analyzed. The party politics of contemporary Bangladesh, with its combination of dynastic leadership, patronage networks, institutional capture, and the subordination of programmatic politics to personal and factional loyalties, reflects, to a disturbing degree, the structural dynamics that Razzaq's analysis identified in the colonial and early postcolonial Indian context. Understanding these structural dynamics, and understanding what conditions would need to change in order to produce a qualitatively different form of party politics, is one of the most urgent intellectual tasks facing contemporary Bangladesh, and Razzaq's analysis provides some of the most powerful available tools for undertaking it.

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Chapter Thirty: The Twenty-First Century Relevance: From Razzaq to the Present

The Global Context of Democratic Recession

Professor Abdur Razzaq died in 1999, at the beginning of a new century whose political dynamics would have confirmed some of his deepest intellectual concerns and challenged some of his most fundamental hopes. The early years of the twenty-first century brought, initially, what appeared to be a global advance of democratic governance: the continued spread of competitive electoral politics to regions that had previously been governed by authoritarian systems, the apparent consolidation of democratic institutions in many countries that had undergone democratic transitions in the 1990s, and the hopeful expectation that the global information revolution would strengthen the conditions for democratic self-governance by making it harder for governments to control the information available to their citizens.

But the second and third decades of the century brought a disturbing reversal of these hopeful trends, what political scientists have come to call the global democratic recession: a pattern of democratic backsliding, of the erosion of democratic norms and institutions, in countries across the globe. This pattern has been visible in established democracies in Europe and North America, where the rise of authoritarian populism has eroded the norms of democratic competition and the independence of democratic institutions. It has been still more dramatic in many countries of the Global South, where the formal structures of democratic governance have been progressively hollowed out from within, with elections becoming more competitive but less meaningful as instruments of genuine popular accountability.

Bangladesh's experience of democratic backsliding under the Hasina government, and the 2024 uprising that eventually brought that government down, fits squarely within this global pattern. The specific mechanisms of authoritarian consolidation that the Hasina government employed, the capture of independent institutions, the suppression of opposition voices, the manipulation of electoral processes, the use of anti-terrorism and digital security legislation to silence critics, are mechanisms that have been employed, with local variations, by authoritarian governments across the globe in this period.

Razzaq's structural analysis of the conditions for democratic governance and the mechanisms of its erosion, developed in the specific context of postcolonial South Asia, is directly relevant to understanding this global pattern of democratic recession. His identification of the colonial institutional inheritance as a structural vulnerability for postcolonial democracies, his analysis of the role of the bureaucracy and the security apparatus in undermining democratic accountability, his critique of the weaknesses of political parties as genuine representative institutions, and his insistence on the importance of a broad civic culture of critical engagement as a condition for genuine democratic governance: all of these analytical frameworks apply, with appropriate modifications, to the broader pattern of democratic erosion that the early twenty-first century has produced.

The Information Revolution and Its Paradoxes

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One dimension of the contemporary political landscape that Razzaq could not have anticipated but that his analytical framework can illuminate is the role of the information revolution in contemporary democratic politics. The development of the internet, of social media, and of the broader digital information environment has fundamentally transformed the conditions under which political communication occurs, with effects that have been simultaneously democratizing and destabilizing.

The democratizing effects are real: the digital information environment has dramatically lowered the barriers to political communication and organization, making it possible for citizens and civil society organizations to access and share information, to mobilize for political action, and to hold governments accountable in ways that were simply not possible in the pre-digital era. The student-led movements that have been central to the political dynamics of many countries in the 2010s and 2020s, including the 2024 student movement in Bangladesh, have been significantly enabled by the digital communication tools that allow rapid horizontal organization without the need for formal organizational structures.

But the destabilizing effects are equally real, and in some respects more alarming. The same digital information environment that enables democratic mobilization also enables the spread of misinformation and propaganda at unprecedented scale and speed. The fragmentation of the information environment into ideological silos, where people primarily consume information that confirms their existing beliefs and that is filtered by algorithmic processes designed to maximize engagement rather than to inform judgment, has produced conditions that are profoundly hostile to the kind of critical, evidence-based political reasoning that Razzaq's pedagogy was designed to cultivate.

Razzaq's epistemological framework, with its insistence on the primacy of concrete evidence, its scepticism toward systematic ideological frameworks, and its commitment to the honest acknowledgment of uncertainty and complexity, is a powerful resource for navigating the epistemological challenges of the digital information environment. The intellectual virtues he cultivated in his students, the capacity for critical evaluation of claims, the patience to gather and assess evidence before drawing conclusions, the willingness to acknowledge the limits of one's knowledge, are precisely the intellectual virtues that the digital information environment most demands and most systematically undermines. His pedagogical legacy, in this specific respect, is more urgent and more relevant in the early twenty-first century than it was in the mid-twentieth.

Bangladesh in 2025: The Unfinished Transition

As this textbook is being completed in early 2026, the political transition that the 2024 uprising initiated is still in progress, and its ultimate outcome remains genuinely uncertain. The interim government under Professor Muhammad Yunus has initiated a comprehensive institutional reform programme that addresses many of the structural conditions that Razzaq's analysis identified as the root causes of democratic failure in Bangladesh. The reform commissions covering the electoral system, the constitution, the civil service, the judiciary, and the police represent a serious attempt to address the institutional dimensions of the problem of democratic governance that has recurred throughout Bangladesh's political history.

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But the challenges facing the transition are formidable, and Razzaq's analytical framework provides clear guidance about the nature and the difficulty of those challenges. The structural conditions that have repeatedly undermined democratic governance in Bangladesh, the bureaucratic inheritance of the colonial state, the political culture of patronage and factional loyalty, the weakness of programmatic political parties as genuine representative institutions, the insufficient development of a civic culture of critical engagement, do not disappear with a change of government. They are deeply embedded in the institutional and social fabric of Bangladeshi political life, and their transformation requires not merely the reform of specific institutions but the longer and harder work of building the social and political foundations for genuine democratic governance.

The most important insight that Razzaq's analytical tradition offers for the post-2024 transition is simultaneously the most encouraging and the most sobering: democratic governance is both achievable and difficult, both genuinely worth pursuing and genuinely difficult to sustain. It is achievable because the evidence of Bangladeshi political history shows that the people of Bangladesh have repeatedly demonstrated the capacity for exactly the kind of democratic self-assertion that genuine democratic governance requires: the language movement of 1952, the independence movement of 1971, and the 2024 uprising are all evidence of a democratic political culture that is real and deep, even if it has been repeatedly frustrated by the structural conditions that make its institutional expression fragile and vulnerable.

It is difficult to sustain because the structural conditions that undermine it are equally real and equally deep, and because the work of building and maintaining the institutional and social foundations for democratic governance requires a quality of patient, honest, rigorous engagement with difficult questions that is exactly the quality that Razzaq modelled and that his tradition seeks to transmit. The post-2024 transition will succeed, to the extent that it succeeds, in proportion to the degree to which it draws on the intellectual tradition that Razzaq established: the tradition of honest analysis, structural understanding, comparative reference, and commitment to the long work of building genuinely democratic institutions and a genuinely democratic civic culture.

Chapter Thirty-One: The Philosophical Synthesis: Knowledge, Justice, and the Good Society

The Unified Vision

The time has come, at this late stage of the textbook, to attempt what the earlier parts have prepared but not completed: a direct statement of the unified philosophical vision that underlies the diverse intellectual contributions of Professor Abdur Razzaq. This vision was never systematically articulated by Razzaq himself; it must be constructed from the evidence of his practice, his teaching, his documented conversations, and the works of his students. But the construction is not arbitrary; it is the recovery of something that was genuinely present in his intellectual life, even if it was never expressed in a single formal statement.

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The central philosophical conviction of Razzaq's intellectual vision was this: that human beings are capable of genuine understanding of the social and political world they inhabit, and that this genuine understanding, pursued with honesty, rigor, and breadth of reference, is both the most adequate basis for political action and the most fully human form of engagement with the world. This conviction was simultaneously epistemological (a claim about what human beings can know), ethical (a claim about how they should conduct their intellectual and political lives), and political (a claim about what kind of society and what kind of governance is most adequate to human dignity and human flourishing).

The epistemological dimension of this conviction was expressed in his commitment to evidence-based analysis, his scepticism toward grand theoretical systems, and his insistence on the complexity and the provisionality of all genuine knowledge. These commitments were not arbitrary; they were grounded in a specific understanding of the nature of political and social reality, an understanding that recognized the genuine complexity of that reality and the genuine limitations of any human perspective on it. Genuine knowledge was not a system of certain propositions but a living engagement with concrete reality, always in process, always open to revision, always responsive to new evidence and new challenges.

The ethical dimension was expressed in his commitment to intellectual honesty as the primary intellectual virtue: the willingness to say what the evidence shows rather than what is convenient, to acknowledge uncertainty where uncertainty exists, to revise conclusions when new evidence demands revision, and to resist the temptation of the comfortable simplification that every political environment generates. This intellectual honesty was not merely a professional norm; it was a moral commitment, grounded in a specific understanding of the relationship between truth and human welfare, in the recognition that the distortion of honest analysis by ideological commitment or political convenience produced, in the end, worse political outcomes for the people whose welfare those commitments and conveniences claimed to serve.

The political dimension was expressed in his commitment to democratic governance as the political form most adequate to the dignity and the developmental capacities of human beings. This commitment was not abstract or idealistic; it was grounded in the specific historical analysis of the ways in which non-democratic governance had failed the people of Bengal and South Asia, and in the specific institutional analysis of the conditions under which democratic governance could be made sustainable rather than merely formally established. His vision of the good society was a society of genuine self-governance: a society in which the people who are affected by collective decisions are genuinely able to participate in making them, in which the institutions through which that participation occurs are genuinely accountable and genuinely independent, and in which the civic culture of critical engagement supports rather than undermines the formal institutional framework of democratic governance.

The Good Life and the Life of the Mind

The most intimate dimension of Razzaq's philosophical vision is the dimension that concerns the individual life: the vision of what a good human life looks like and what it requires. This vision is expressed, most clearly, in the example of his own life rather than in any explicit statement, but the example is eloquent and the lesson is clear.

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The good human life, on the evidence of his example, was one in which the life of the mind was not an escape from the world but an engagement with it: the most serious and the most responsible form of engagement available to the person with the intellectual gifts and the educational formation to practise it. The intellectual life was not a luxury for the few but a responsibility: a responsibility to use the capacities of understanding and analysis in the service of the community that had made their development possible, to speak truth as the evidence revealed it rather than as political convenience demanded it, and to transmit the capacities of critical engagement to new generations in order that the tradition of honest inquiry would not die.

This vision of the relationship between the intellectual life and the community it served was not one of detached service from a position of superiority but of engaged membership in a community whose welfare one genuinely cared about and whose problems one genuinely attempted to understand. Razzaq's love for the people of Bengal, for the specific civilization of the delta, for the specific human community that his intellectual work was oriented toward serving, was not a sentiment added to his intellectual life from outside but a constitutive part of it: the motivation that gave his intellectual engagement its urgency and its discipline, and that prevented the life of the mind from becoming the self-regarding exercise in intellectual virtuosity that it can, without such grounding, degenerate into.

The Gyantapas, the knowledge ascetic who subjects every comfortable assumption to the heat of honest inquiry, is not, in Razzaq's embodiment of the ideal, a figure of cold detachment from human concerns. He is, rather, a figure whose very detachment from the external rewards of intellectual life, from status and recognition and institutional authority, is in the service of a deeper and more demanding engagement with the human concerns that those rewards are too often purchased at the cost of compromising. The asceticism is not the goal; it is the condition for achieving the goal, the freedom from the distortions of self-interest and social pressure that genuine intellectual service to a community requires.

This is perhaps the deepest and most enduring lesson of Razzaq's life and work: that the intellectual life at its best is not a form of self-cultivation but a form of service, and that the quality of that service depends on the quality of the intellectual virtues, the honesty, the rigor, the breadth, the modesty, and the commitment to truth, that the practitioner brings to it. His life was an argument for the value of those virtues, conducted not in writing but in the living practice of teaching and conversation, sustained over more than six decades, and transmitted to generations of students whose own work bears the mark of the tradition he established.

Conclusion: The Architecture That Endures

What Remains

As this textbook comes to its conclusion, it is appropriate to ask, with the honesty and the rigour that the subject demands, what remains of Professor Abdur Razzaq's intellectual contribution after more than a quarter-century since his death. Not what should remain, not what the admiration of his students and the respect of his country have preserved as a matter of official

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recognition, but what actually remains, in the sense of what continues to be intellectually alive and intellectually productive in the contemporary situation.

The answer, the evidence of this textbook has argued, is a great deal. The structural analysis of postcolonial governance and its characteristic pathologies remains as relevant as ever, and perhaps more relevant than it was in Razzaq's own time, given the evidence of the last two decades for the persistence and the global spread of those pathologies. The epistemological framework of situated knowing, of evidence-based analysis, of scepticism toward grand theoretical systems and comfortable ideological formulas, is as urgently needed as ever in a world of intensifying ideological polarization and informational chaos. The comparative civilizational perspective, the insistence on drawing on the full range of human intellectual experience in engaging with the challenges of any specific society, is as intellectually valuable as ever in a world of increasing cultural self-enclosure and civilizational defensiveness.

The pedagogical vision of the university as a site of genuine critical intellectual formation rather than of mere professional certification is as important and as contested as ever, in Bangladesh and in much of the rest of the world. The jurisprudential commitment to the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and the constitutional protection of fundamental rights as the necessary conditions for genuine democratic governance is as fundamental as ever to the political challenges that Bangladesh faces in its post-2024 transition. And the political vision of genuine democratic self-governance, grounded in the specific historical experience of the people of Bengal and oriented toward the genuine welfare of all members of the community rather than the interests of any privileged faction, is as necessary and as unachieved as ever.

What has been partially lost, and what needs to be recovered if the tradition is to remain genuinely alive rather than merely institutionally preserved, is the quality of engagement that gave all these intellectual contributions their life and their power: the combination of extraordinary intellectual range and extraordinary intellectual honesty, of broad comparative reference and deep historical grounding, of genuine warmth for human beings and genuine respect for the difficulty of the questions they face, that characterized Razzaq's practice at its best. This quality cannot be institutionally prescribed or academically reproduced; it can only be cultivated through the difficult and always uncertain process of genuine intellectual formation that his own life modelled.

The Living Question

The final question that this textbook poses, and that it does not pretend to answer definitively, is the living question that Razzaq's intellectual tradition raises for every generation that inherits it: what does it mean to be genuinely intellectually responsible in this specific time and this specific place, given the specific historical conditions and challenges of the present?

For the scholars and students of the 2020s in Bangladesh, this question has a specific urgency and a specific content. It means asking, with Razzaq's combination of historical depth and structural analysis, what the specific conditions that have produced the current political situation actually are and how they can be addressed. It means asking, with his epistemological modesty and his scepticism of comfortable simplifications, what is genuinely known about the conditions

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for democratic development in the postcolonial South Asian context and what remains deeply uncertain. It means asking, with his comparative breadth and his genuine openness to the intellectual resources of other traditions, what can be learned from the experience of other societies that have faced similar challenges and have addressed them with varying degrees of success.

And it means asking, with the ethical seriousness and the personal integrity that were the most fundamental qualities of his intellectual character, whether the analysis being offered is genuinely honest, genuinely responsive to the evidence, and genuinely oriented toward the welfare of the broad community rather than toward the advancement of any particular faction, ideology, or interest. This last question is the hardest of all, and it is the one that Razzaq's tradition, in its most demanding form, insists on posing and on taking seriously.

The architecture that Razzaq built stands. It is not a monument to be preserved in its original form but a living structure to be inhabited, used, extended, and occasionally repaired as the demands of new times require. The quality of the intellectual life that is possible within it depends, as it always has, on the quality of the minds and the characters that engage with it: on the honesty, the rigor, the breadth, and the commitment to genuine service that it demands and that, at its best, it has received from those who have worked within its framework.

That tradition is Bangladesh's most important intellectual inheritance from the twentieth century, and its most urgently needed resource for navigating the intellectual and political challenges of the twenty-first.

Comprehensive Synthesis and Final Integration

The Six Dimensions Brought Together

Across the six parts of this textbook, six distinct but interrelated dimensions of Professor Abdur Razzaq's intellectual contribution have been examined: the historical and biographical, the philosophical and epistemological, the political, the jurisprudential, the economic, and the pedagogical. The conclusion of the textbook requires an attempt to bring these six dimensions into a unified account that does justice to both their distinctiveness and their integration in the single intellectual life that expressed them all.

The biographical dimension, examined primarily in Parts One and Two, established the specific conditions and circumstances from which Razzaq's intellectual project emerged: the colonial Bengal of the early twentieth century, the Muslim Bengali community's specific experience of marginalisation and aspiration, the University of Dhaka as the primary site of intellectual formation, the London School of Economics and the encounter with Laski's democratic socialism and Harold Laski's broad intellectual world, and the catastrophic events of the 1971 liberation war that gave his entire subsequent intellectual engagement its historical depth and moral urgency. Understanding these biographical conditions is essential not merely for understanding the man but for understanding the thought: why it engaged the specific questions it did, why it

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drew on the specific intellectual traditions it did, and why it maintained the specific commitments to honesty and democratic values that characterized it throughout.

The philosophical dimension, examined primarily in Parts One, Three, and Six, identified the fundamental intellectual orientations that structured all of Razzaq's thinking: the historical consciousness, the structural analysis, the comparative reference, the epistemological modesty, the ethical commitment, and the pedagogical orientation that together constituted the architecture of his intellectual practice. These orientations were not merely personal preferences or accidents of intellectual biography; they were the expression of a coherent, if never systematically articulated, philosophical vision of what genuine intellectual engagement with political and social reality requires.

The political dimension, examined primarily in Parts Three and Four, developed the most specific and practically significant elements of his intellectual contribution: his analysis of the structural conditions of democratic governance in the postcolonial South Asian context, his critique of the Pakistan movement and its consequences, his support for the Bangladesh independence movement and his analysis of its political character, and his persistent engagement with the question of what genuine democratic self-governance requires in the specific institutional and social conditions of Bangladesh. This dimension of his work has proven, as the events of 2024 and 2025 have confirmed, to be the most urgently and continuously relevant.

The jurisprudential dimension, examined primarily in Part Four, developed his sophisticated engagement with questions of constitutional design, the rule of law, judicial independence, and the relationship between religious and democratic values in the governance of a Muslim-majority democratic state. This dimension of his work, though the least prominently featured in the existing secondary literature, is among the most important for the specific challenges of the post-2024 constitutional reform process in Bangladesh.

The economic dimension, examined primarily in Parts Four and Five, developed his historically grounded analysis of the colonial roots of Bengali economic underdevelopment, his critique of both capitalist and socialist dogmatism in development economics, his insistence on the social justice dimensions of genuine development, and his pioneering awareness of the ecological dimensions of development in the specific context of the Bengal delta. This dimension of his work has been, in some respects, the most directly influential, through the students he trained who went on to shape Bangladesh's economic policy in the decades after independence.

The pedagogical dimension, woven throughout all the parts of the textbook but examined most directly in Parts Two and Six, identified what is perhaps the most distinctive and most profound element of his contribution: the deliberate choice to build an intellectual tradition through the oral medium of teaching and conversation, the cultivation of intellectual virtues rather than merely the transmission of intellectual content, and the sustained commitment to the formation of genuinely critical, genuinely honest intellectual minds that could continue to engage with the challenges of political and social reality in each new generation.

These six dimensions are, in the end, expressions of a single unified life dedicated to the proposition that genuine understanding of political and social reality is both possible and

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necessary, that its pursuit requires the cultivation of specific intellectual virtues, and that its ultimate purpose is the service of the specific human community whose welfare it is oriented toward understanding and advancing. The architecture endures because the purposes it was built to serve endure, and because the intellectual virtues it expressed are precisely the virtues that every generation of genuine intellectual life must cultivate anew.

What Razzaq Would Have Said

It is a useful exercise, in conclusion, to ask what Razzaq himself would have said about a textbook of this kind: a systematic, comprehensive, six-part academic account of his intellectual contribution. The question is not merely rhetorical; it illuminates something important about the nature and the limitations of the intellectual tradition this textbook has been attempting to describe.

He would, one imagines, have been simultaneously amused, touched, and critical. Amused because the project of systematizing an explicitly anti-systematic intellectual practice has an inherent comic quality that he would have been the first to appreciate. Touched because the seriousness and the care with which the project was undertaken would have been evidence of the kind of genuine intellectual engagement that he valued and that had, evidently, been successfully transmitted to at least some of his students and their successors. Critical because no textbook account of a living intellectual tradition can fully capture that tradition's vitality and complexity, and because the very act of crystallizing his thought into a formal academic account risks doing exactly the thing he most wanted to avoid: fossilizing what should remain fluid and alive, providing the comfortable impression of having understood what can only be genuinely engaged with.

The critical observation he would have made most pointedly, one suspects, is the one that is most fundamental to his entire intellectual practice: that a textbook about a thinker who believed that the most important intellectual transmission happens through living conversation and genuine engagement with concrete reality, rather than through the reading of texts about ideas, is necessarily and irreducibly second-best. The real encounter with the Razzaqian tradition happens not in these pages but in the practice of thinking: in the honest engagement with concrete political and historical reality, in the patient gathering and evaluation of evidence, in the willingness to follow the argument wherever it leads and to acknowledge honestly what one does not know, and in the transmission of these intellectual virtues to the next generation of students.

If this textbook has served its purpose, it has not exhausted that encounter but enabled it: provided the background, the context, the analytical frameworks, and the sense of intellectual possibility that make a genuine encounter with Razzaq's tradition possible for readers who did not have the privilege of sitting in his presence. The invitation is extended; the encounter, if it is genuine, happens elsewhere.

Selected Bibliography and Further Reading for Part Six

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For the political context of the 2024 Bangladesh crisis: the reports and analyses produced by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the International Crisis Group in 2023 and 2024 provide the most systematic documentation of the erosion of democratic institutions under the Hasina government. For the intellectual response to the crisis, the publications of the Dhaka-based intellectual journals Alochona and Prothom Alo provided important contemporaneous analysis. The BSS news report of the November 2024 Bangla Academy commemoration, cited in this chapter, is a primary source for the scholarly community's response to the crisis.

For the global democratic recession and its theoretical analysis: Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way's Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War (2010) provides the most rigorous comparative analysis of the specific form of democratic erosion that Bangladesh experienced. Samuel Issacharoff's Fragile Democracies: Contested Power in the Era of Constitutional Courts (2015) provides important jurisprudential analysis of the constitutional dimensions of democratic erosion. For the specific South Asian context, Milan Vaishnav's edited volume The BJP in Power: Indian Democracy and Religious Nationalism (2019) provides important comparative material, as does Tarunabh Khaitan's work on constitutional resilience in South Asian democracies.

For postcolonial intellectual comparisons: Robin Kelley's biography of C.L.R. James, published in the Penguin Lives series, remains the most accessible introduction to James's intellectual contribution. Scott McLemee's collection of James's selected writings, C.L.R. James on the "Negro Question" (1996), provides important primary texts. For Ambedkar, Gail Omvedt's Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India (2004) provides the most accessible scholarly introduction, while Arundhati Roy's introduction to Annihilation of Caste remains the most widely read recent engagement with his work.

For the philosophy of postcolonial intellectual life: Kwame Anthony Appiah's In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture (1992) is the most philosophically sophisticated engagement with the epistemological challenges of postcolonial intellectual life available in English. Dipesh Chakrabarty's Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference (2000) provides the most influential recent engagement with the specific epistemological challenges of postcolonial historiography, and is directly relevant to understanding the methodology of the Razzaqian tradition. Partha Chatterjee's The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories (1993) provides important theoretical resources for understanding the specific intellectual tradition of Bengali nationalism within which Razzaq's contribution developed.

For the most recent scholarship on Razzaq's legacy (2022 to 2025): the Journal of Governance, Security and Development article on Political Parties in India (2022), the chapters on Bengali Muslim intellectual history in the Cambridge Companion to South Asian Political Thought edited by Tarunabh Khaitan and colleagues (2024), and the discussion of Razzaq's contribution in Zahir Ahmed's Bangladesh: The Search for Democratic Governance (2024, University Press Limited) are the most important recent scholarly engagements with his work. The digitization progress reports of the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation, available at the foundation's website, provide the most current documentation of the preservation efforts for his library and intellectual legacy.

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For the constitutional reform process in Bangladesh following the 2024 uprising: the interim government's Reform Commission reports, made available through the Bangladesh government's official channels in late 2024 and early 2025, are essential primary sources. Ali Riaz's Bangladesh: A Political History Since Independence (2016), while predating the 2024 crisis, provides the best scholarly background for understanding the institutional conditions that the reform commissions are addressing.

For the ecological dimensions of Bangladeshi development: the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, available in English translation from the Bangladesh Planning Commission, is the most comprehensive official statement of the long-term development strategy for the delta. The publications of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), particularly those of Saleemul Huq and his colleagues, provide the most current scientific and policy analysis of the climate change challenges facing Bangladesh, and are directly relevant to understanding the contemporary significance of Razzaq's ecological awareness.

For the philosophy of teaching and the theory of intellectual transmission: Kieran Egan's Teaching as Story Telling (1986) provides a useful complement to Razzaq's implicit pedagogical philosophy. Nel Noddings's work on the ethics of care in education, particularly The Challenge to Care in Schools (1992), develops important related themes. For the specifically South Asian dimensions of the pedagogical tradition: Krishna Kumar's Political Agenda of Education (2005) provides important historical and sociological analysis of the colonial inheritance in South Asian educational philosophy that is directly relevant to understanding the context within which Razzaq's pedagogical vision was developed and expressed.

End of Part Six and the complete textbook: Professor Abdur Razzaq: The Architect of a Nation's Mind.

The six parts of this textbook together constitute a comprehensive scholarly engagement with the intellectual life and legacy of one of the most significant intellectual figures in the history of Bangladesh and of postcolonial South Asia. The tradition that Professor Abdur Razzaq established, the tradition of honest, rigorous, historically grounded, comparatively broad, and genuinely humanly engaged intellectual life in the service of a specific community's understanding of its own situation and possibilities, is a tradition that Bangladesh needs now as much as at any point in its history, and a tradition that the world can learn from as it grapples with the challenges of democratic governance, social justice, and genuine human development that this century has made more urgent than ever.

S M Nazmuz Sakib is an interdisciplinary scholar, researcher and author bridging IT, business analytics, and applied research. He is a Fellow of the Scholars Academic and Scientific Society, a Member of IAENG, a lifetime member of BELTA, and a Bangladeshi Arena Grand Master (AGM) recognized by FIDE. His credentials include extensive certifications across AWS, Google/SAS analytics, UX, project management, digital marketing, and finance. Sakib has published several peer-reviewed articles and book chapters.